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PERCY THROWER'S practical spring guide

ENJOY YOUR WEEKEND GARDENING

Week ending March 9 1957 *Every Wednesday Fourpence*

JOHN BULL

Begins this week: The daredevil story of Britain's toughest troops — the super-commandos of the Special Air Service

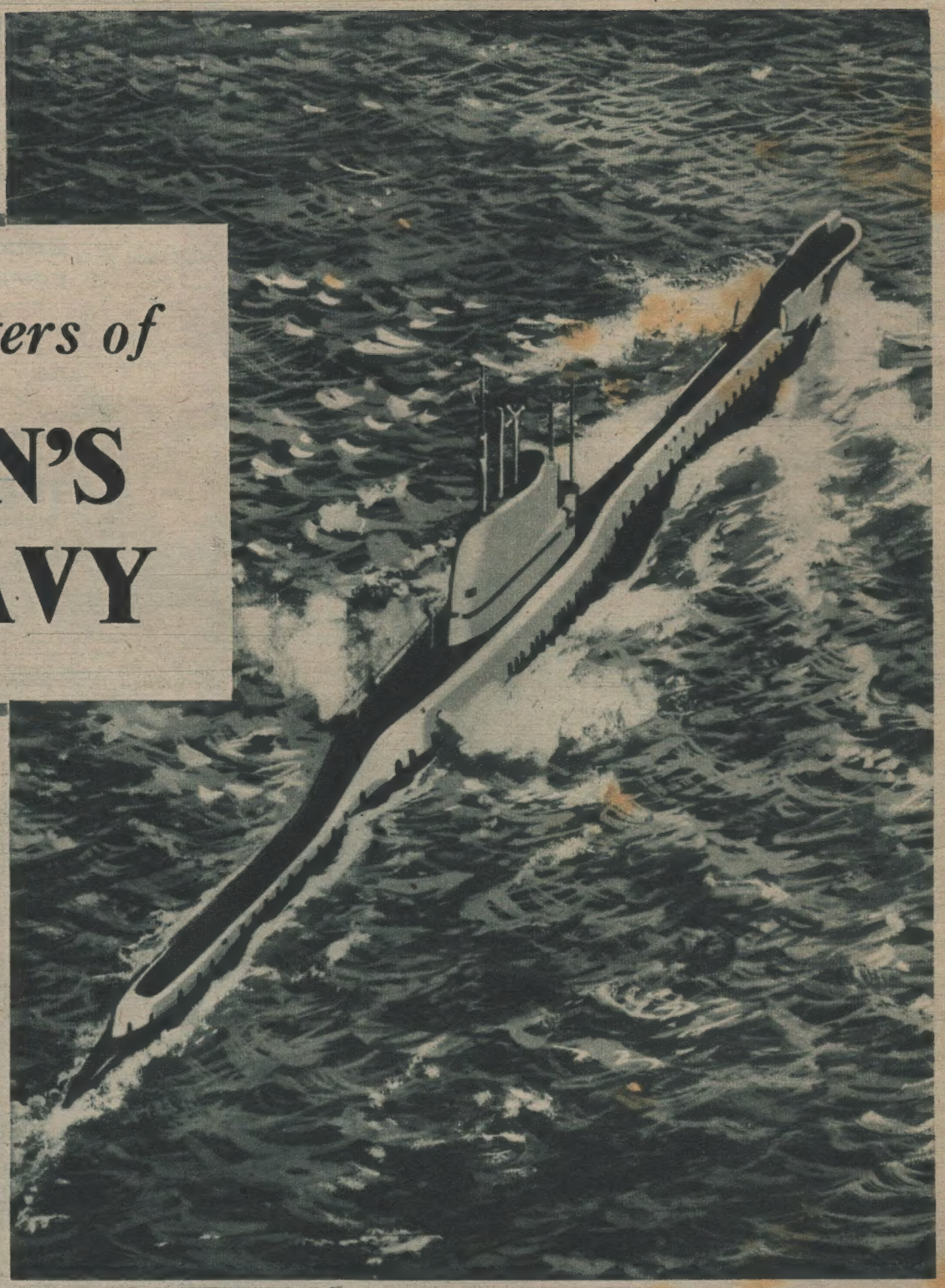
THESE MEN ARE DANGEROUS

by Captain Derrick Harrison, M.C.

THE WHITE WIND by H. E. BATES

The silent hunters of

BRITAIN'S NEW NAVY



ONE of our most important weapons is the submarine. The basic problems of submarine development are to increase underwater speeds, provide a greater range of operation and ensure complete silence when submerged.

Below are a few of the many innovations which are putting us well ahead in all these aspects of submarine development.

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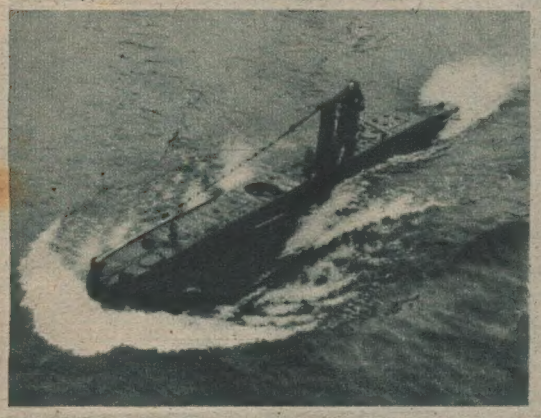
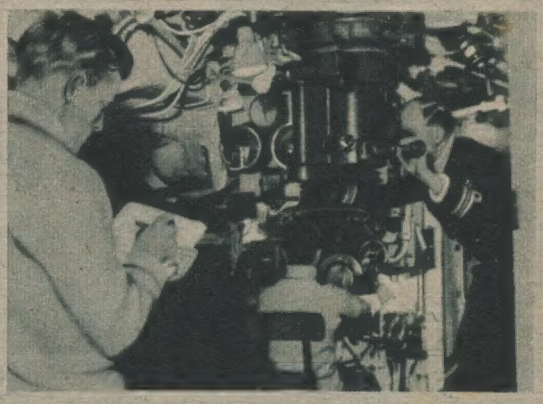


New Midget Submarines with a two-man crew can creep into harbours and other defended positions denied to their full-sized counterparts.



Life in a Very Silent Service. Rather special qualities are required of the men who serve in the Submarine Service. The advanced equipment is highly intricate and calls for well-knit team work on the part of the crew. The ships themselves are very compact and the men have to live in each others' pockets.

As a result, a special sort of family spirit has developed amongst all sub-mariners. And it is a contagious spirit—for it brings more and more volunteers to this 'Very Silent Service'.

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JOHN BULL

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CHANCERY 3344 MARCH 9, 1957 VOLUME 101 NUMBER 2645

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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Derrick Harrison finds the war hard to forget

WHEN Derrick Harrison was spring-cleaning his home in 1955 he found in a study drawer the uncompleted manuscript of a book on his regiment—the Special Air Service—which he had written ten years earlier.

Later that day Harrison glanced at an evening newspaper and saw the headline: CLOAK-AND-DAGGER MEN SEEK MISSING DOCUMENT. He read that S.A.S. headquarters were anxious to get in touch with the author—name unknown—of the regiment's history. Harrison completed the manuscript and sent it off. The newspaper article prompted a publisher's inquiry, and Harrison sold his story, part one of which begins on page 14.

Serving in the S.A.S. as a saboteur behind enemy lines had other effects on Harrison's postwar life. A lean, reserved and normally unobtrusive man, he has occasionally attracted interest by his unusual behaviour in public. One morning soon after the war Harrison turned into a street near his office as a pneumatic drill started up. "It sounded just like a German machine-gun," he says, "so I flung myself to the ground, making the best use of available cover. My face was rather red when I got up. I tried hard to make it look as if I'd tripped."

Harrison, who is now thirty-nine and editor of a professional magazine, found it hard to shed many other wartime habits. When he saw a railway bridge or strategic building he could not resist planning to blow it up. And even now, at home with his wife and two daughters, he usually sits facing the door. "In any room," he says, "I like to see that my escape route is clear."

ON February 21, Percy Thrower's *Gardening Club* was promoted to a regular twenty-minute Thursday evening spot on B.B.C. television. Thrower, whose JOHN BULL gardening Supplement appears in this issue, takes the new responsibility in his stride. But the fame that comes to a TV gardener has its disconcerting moments. Last year, in a corner of the Shrewsbury Flower Show, Thrower was talking with General Sir Oliver Leese, ex-Eighth Army commander, who now grows cacti at Shrewsbury. "A woman came up with a puzzled expression on her face, and said: 'Excuse me, but haven't I seen you before?' I said perhaps she had—on TV. At once her face brightened. 'Oh yes, I remember,' she said. 'You were with one of the circuses.'"

Thrower, who is parks superintendent at Shrewsbury, last Sunday completed his hundredth fortnightly "sound" broadcast in the Midland Region of the B.B.C. He lectures on gardening all over the country, judges at the Royal Horticultural Society Show and at the Great Yorkshire Show, and has written a book about gardening.

He has three daughters—"the eldest, Margaret, aged twelve, is a keen gardener," he says. "She wants to be a professional, and I think there is a great future for girls in gardening."

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Free Speech

- **Do husbands' manners really matter?**
- **Speeding up production—of ideas**
- **The boss who wants a ban on sport**

THE generations of English women who are now middle-aged and elderly have made an appalling mess of training their men-folk. To them, the only thing that matters is manners.

They forgive a man anything if he walks on the outside of the pavement, takes his hat off in a lift, rises to his feet when a woman enters a room, and hurries to open the door for a girl who is perfectly capable of opening it herself.

My husband, like most men of his generation, doesn't always remember to do these things—but he does help with the spring cleaning, the washing up and the children.

These are the manners I prefer to those of so many of the older men, who in public will rush round the car to open the door for their wives and, at home, go to sleep after dinner and leave them to clear away and wash up.

Give me the new chivalry every time.—E. P., Southampton.

No Rule?

When I checked my two tape measures against a ruler, I found that neither was accurate. One of them showed an error of an inch in a yard. Is there no law regulating measures? Surely we should be able to expect better than this from manufacturers.—MRS. J. UPHILL, Wanstead, London.

"There are no regulations insisting on the accuracy of tape measures sold to the public," says the Board of Trade. "But if they are used for measuring goods for sale they must be checked for accuracy and stamped by an inspector."

Honoured Hosts

I know a woman who entertains foreign visitors to Britain every week. She also helps to raise money for starving children abroad and people in backward countries.

She and people like her, such as the family I know who invite foreign guests to their home in the summer, are fine advertisements for Britain.

I should like to see the United Nations found a series of "good citizen" awards for each country. These would give a free month's holiday overseas to those who can show that they have helped foreign people. We have nothing to lose by such a scheme—but a world's friendship to gain.—R. W. S., Newcastle upon Tyne.

Their Own Work

In my factory I, like many manufacturers, operate a suggestions box scheme which has always drawn a regular trickle of ideas from employees for improving our products.

Many suggestions are not practicable, of course, but we award a bonus to any worker putting forward a usable idea. Recently, as an added inducement, I decided also that the man's name should be mentioned in the brochure we send out to customers, such as "Modified by ———," or "Design improved by ———."

I expected a slight increase in the number of suggestions, but to my surprise they have more than doubled. Who says workers have no pride in their work these days?—R. T., London.

Right Numbers

Appropriate car registration numbers ("Portrait On The Number Plate," JOHN BULL, February 16) are common in the Perth district. Two men in the small town of Blairgowrie showed ingenuity and imagination with their choices. One, a doctor, shows the number plate DOC 999 on his car. The other, a potato merchant, went to great pains to get the number POT 80 for his.—A. THOMPSON BROWN, Burghmuir Road, Perth.

Another Monster

I saw a monster similar to the one described by Commander Duff ("Strange Tales Of The Sea," JOHN BULL, February 2). It was in May, 1919, and we were on a return voyage from the River Plate in the S.S. Princessa, not far from the island of Fernando de Noronha.

We could see the monster travelling at a great pace in the same direction as the ship. It had five or

six arches, was dark in colour and seemed to glisten in the sun.

The captain told us he thought it was a sea serpent. He said he had seen a similar creature, also in the South Atlantic, when he was apprenticed in sail.—H. SPELMAN SMITH, Lymington, Hants.

Hard Playing

I am all in favour of weekend sport, and several of my staff play for sports teams.

But although they tell me it makes them feel fresh for Monday mornings, their work is suffering in another way. So far this season, two of the three rugger players have been injured—both with broken collar bones and one of them with a broken leg as well.

Their sport may have brought them pleasure, but it has cost me about six weeks' wages. If it goes on I shall have to consider asking them either to stop playing, or to leave the firm—both of which I am, of course, reluctant to do.—W. S. L., Sussex.

Spastic Mother

Like Vera Dean in your series, "Three Steps Forward," I am a spastic.

I married eight years ago, and my husband and I now have three children—who are all perfectly normal—and, apart from occasional help, I have managed on my own.

Before having the children I couldn't kneel, as I shook so badly. But in the past year I have found that with a chair handy to help me up, I can do my own scrubbing and polishing without waiting for my husband to do it.

If I lean against the sink I can

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

ENGLAND IS RICH

England Is Rich by Harry Hopkins, has just been published by Harrap at 18s. It includes articles published in JOHN BULL'S "Journey Into Britain" series in 1954 and 1955. Hopkins describes his book as "a portrait of England at mid-century."

Everybody loves a Kosset *carpet!*

Who could resist the rich cherished feeling you get when you walk on Kosset Carpets? They make the whole house so warm and quiet, give it a cradled-in-luxury look. Yet these remarkable new carpets cost much less than you'd expect to pay for anything so luxurious. That's because special machines make them in a revolutionary way.

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Free Speech

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

stand for long periods to do the washing. I have even carried my children across the room, which many have said would be impossible.

A spastic can run a home—if given the chance with the right understanding partner who is willing to take a chance.—MRS. M. J. STEELE, Barnstaple, N. Devon.

Cleaned Out

I have always been amazed at the amount of refuse—tins, bottles, old buckets and ashes—which is scattered along the country lanes and in the fields here at Dortmund. But I have recently discovered why. The German people have to pay the equivalent of seven shillings a month for the use of a dustbin, and having it emptied once a week.

Most of the people think this is too expensive, and so they dispose of their refuse themselves, when it gets dark.—MRS. J. WATSON, B.A.O.R.14.

Home From Home

When I go abroad, I am appalled at the attitude of English people on holiday.

For all the interest they take in their new surroundings they might

just as well be in Bournemouth or Blackpool. I once overheard two Londoners complaining about the lack of pubs in Paris—and they were passing within fifty yards of the beautiful cathedral of Notre Dame.

Moans because the French cannot *all* speak English are common, and so are complaints that you can't get English food everywhere.

One Englishman I know is doing a roaring trade with a restaurant which serves fish and chips. People who couldn't care less about France or its people sit there sipping what he guarantees to be "the best cup of tea in France."—P. D., King's Lynn, Norfolk.

Way To Happiness

The Bishop of Birmingham is right when he says that the Church should work to prevent marriages breaking down (JOHN BULL, February 16).

But the root of the trouble lies with non-churchgoing couples who, though rejecting the discipline and worship of the Church, insist on being married in church. The register office is the place for them—no matter what the neighbours may think. I do not deny that the marriages of churchgoers break up—but I would guess that they form only a small percentage of divorces.

The whole tragedy is that we seem to have lost the virtue of forgiveness. The Archbishop of Canterbury said that a single case of adultery should not be a reason for divorce, and that men and women would be far happier if they learned to forgive one another. We have a scriptural warrant for forgiveness, and do we not pray, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us"?

Perhaps, as the Bishop suggests, the Church can lead the way in this. — REV. N. GREENFIELD, Christ Church Vicarage, Reading.

Rare Crime?

Kidnapping, which was the central theme of *The Stolen Boy* (JOHN BULL, February 2), seems to be a crime seldom heard of in Britain—in real life. I believe that it is a capital offence in some parts of the United States.—J. W. INNES, Dunachton Road, Inverness, Scotland.

Nine cases of kidnapping—child stealing—occurred in Britain in 1954, and nineteen in 1955. The penalty can be seven years' imprisonment.

Maximum penalties vary in the United States; some states impose the death sentence.

Through The Motions

I was interested in the "fantastic rigmarole" of signing a deed ("Free Speech," February 16). A month after I signed a flat lease left for me by my new landlord, I was asked to go to a solicitor's office on the other side of the city. I had to trace over my signature *with a dry nib* because a witness was necessary.—W. L. P., Handsworth, Birmingham.

Official Move

British Railways charge a shilling to reserve a seat in a train. But recently five other people and myself, who had reserved all six seats in one compartment, were asked by an official to lift up the armrests and move up to make room for two more people.

Having paid our shillings, surely we were entitled to spend the journey in comfort. After all, only six reservations were booked in the compartment.—E. W., Birmingham.

British Railways says: "Although a passenger paying a reservation fee is entitled to the whole seat, we find that most people are willing to move up when a train is crowded."

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

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THE COVER

WHAT'S the use? A fellow can hoe to perfection, lay a line as straight as a surveyor's, faithfully follow the instructions on the packet . . . and then a chirruping discussion on the fence brings him right back to nature. Those vultures! They haven't even the decency to wait until dusk before deciding among themselves the division of the spoils. And to think that his own children were nurturing the little blighters during that cold spell last month. As Critchlow says, the cover gardener might just as well have sown bird seed in the first place.

PERSIL for coloureds, too!

That gay cotton skirt looks as fresh as the flowers—that's because the colours have been kept "alive" by a regular wash in Persil suds. And look at the knife edges of those pleats—Persil helps a skirt like this stay smart by firmly, *yet gently*, removing every scrap of dirt.

Use Persil for *your* coloured things, from a plain blouse to the gayest print—it keeps them *all* as fresh and bright as new.

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Wash and rinse your durably pleated skirt gently—don't *wring it, but let it* drip *dry. This will help keep the pleats knife-sharp.*

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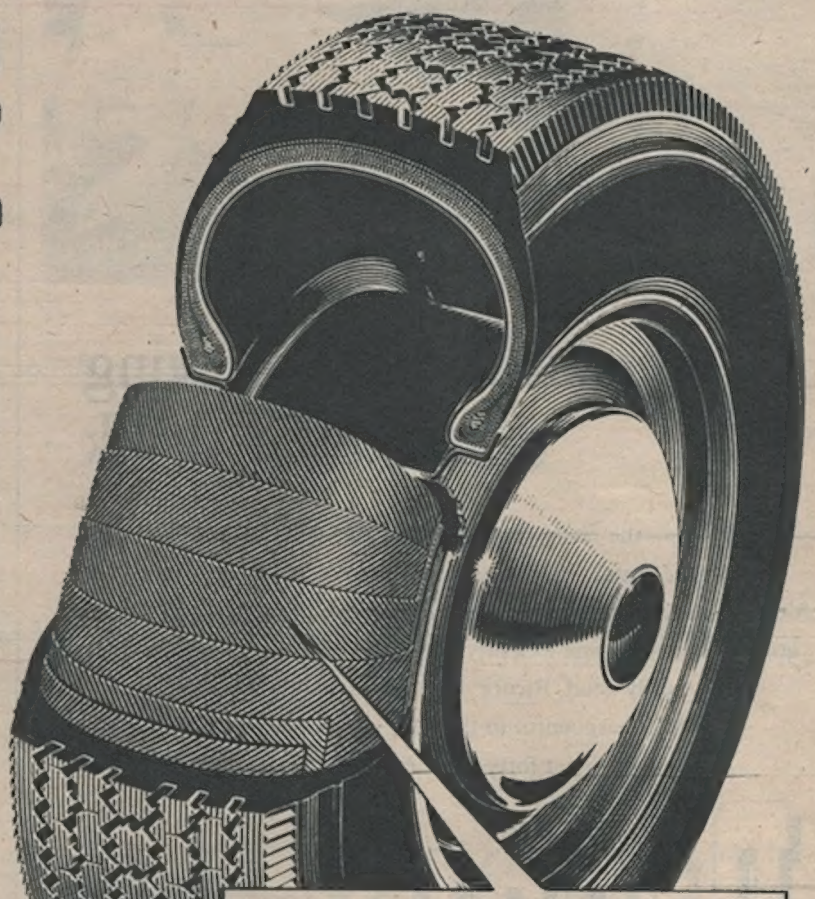

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THE CRUCIAL CALL

by N. J. CRISP

Ruth left the supper to burn. Her husband was on the telephone—and he was asking her to save their future

WHEN the alarm clock went off at six o'clock in the morning, Neil Terry's eyes were already wide open. He reached out and turned it off. He thought: *Thursday*. The day he had promised himself that he would tell Ruth that it was no good any more; that he was finished.

Ruth stirred and yawned. He watched her affectionately, yet with a trace of fear. She seemed so untroubled lying there, trusting in him, confident of the future. She would take it badly, worse perhaps than most women, and he felt sick in the stomach, like a man unwillingly about to inflict some monstrous harm.

Ruth said sleepily: "Are you going to Guildford today?"

"Yes. On the eight o'clock train. You needn't get up," he added, hoping that she wouldn't.

She stretched and sat up. "You'll need some breakfast. . . ."

Neil shaved quickly, rubbed his face dry, and felt a little better. He peered, frowning, into the mirror. He had got used to his greying hair. He had had it a long time now, and at least there was plenty of it. But the deep, worried lines that were beginning to score his face were new and unpleasant.

They were bad for business, too. No one liked a worried-looking man.

Ruth already had the breakfast on the table, and Neil sat down opposite her. He didn't begin. He might as well get it over now, cancel the Guildford trip, and start winding things up.

"Ruth——" he said.

The door opened, and the ten-year-old figure of his elder son appeared, still in pyjamas. Neil said irritably: "There's no need for you to get up, Mark."

"We're hungry."

"We? Don't tell me you've got Simon there too."

A shyly grinning face appearing round Mark's waist answered him.

Neil grunted, and began to spoon his corn

Neil hesitated. "Could you put the children to bed early tonight?" he asked awkwardly. "There's something . . ."

ILLUSTRATED BY COLEMAN

Neil had to admit it now—barring miracles, his business was finished. Still, he might as well catch that train . . .

flakes. It was out of his hands. He couldn't talk about it with the boys there.

Mark said: "Alan Cole brought his new bicycle to school yesterday. It's super. Am I still having a bicycle for my birthday?"

"I expect so."

"Well, can I come with you and choose it?" Mark asked. "What about Saturday?"

"What's the hurry?"

"It's my birthday next Wednesday," Mark pointed out. Neil had forgotten. He wondered how much bicycles cost these days.

Simon said: "I want one too."

"You've got a tricycle."

"I want one with two wheels."

"You couldn't balance," Mark explained, with the superiority of his extra years.

Ruth put eggs and bacon on the table. "What are you doing on Saturday, dear?" she asked.

"I don't know. Why?"

"I thought we might go and look at that house I saw the other day. I've been thinking about it, and I really believe it would suit us nicely. It's not new, but it's a comfortable sort of a house. It stands well back from the road, and. . . ."

Neil ate mechanically, letting the words flow past him. It was going to be even harder than he had thought.

"So I thought we could go and look at it together," Ruth finished.

"I wouldn't bank on it too much," Neil said uneasily.

"There's no harm in looking at it. We deserve something better than this place. We've been here long enough."

They had; too long in fact. And only a few months ago Neil would have set off happily to see the new place. Now he was wondering if they would even be able to keep on their present house. . . .

He pushed back his chair and said: "I'm going to the office first. I want to see Arthur before I go."

Ruth said: "What time will you be back?"

"I'll try and catch the four-thirty train."

"Telephone me if you miss it."

"Of course, darling." He hesitated, and then said awkwardly: "Could you put the children to bed early? There's something—I'd like to have the evening clear."

He kissed her hurriedly to stifle her question, and left the house.

When he got to the big converted garage that was used as a workshop, he found Arthur Foster already there poring over some papers. Arthur said: "Morning, Neil."

Neil said: "You're early."

Arthur grinned. He said: "I was just looking at the plans for the new building. I reckon if we took a bit off the office space and gave it to the machine shop. . . ."

Neil said: "You can forget it."

Arthur took out his pipe. "What does that mean?" he asked.

Neil lit a cigarette from Arthur's match, postponing the moment when the words had to come out. If it was bad telling Arthur, what would it be like telling Ruth? He said: "Do you ever see any of your old friends from the factory?"

"Now and then. Had a drink with the works manager last week. Why?"

"I hear they're pretty busy. Did he want you to go back?"

"Dropped a broad hint."

Neil took the plunge. "Look Arthur, you're drawing practically nothing out of the company at the moment. I'd like you to know that you're free to accept his offer. I'll buy your shares back from you at face-value. While," he added with a trace of bitterness, "there's enough money left to do it."

Arthur took his pipe out of his mouth and studied it. "What's the idea, Neil?"

"I'm trying to give you the chance to pull out while you've got anything left to pull out with."

Arthur laid his big fist on the building plans. "What about these?"

"So much waste paper," Neil said with a weary gesture. "Six months ago, when they were drawn up, things looked pretty good. I'm merely thankful we haven't done anything about it."

Arthur knocked out his pipe. "Tobacco tastes foul at this hour." He gazed at Neil with level grey eyes. "This isn't altogether a surprise," he said. "Our stocks are running high—I cut back production a week ago. You didn't say anything, and I didn't want to trouble you. Who is it? Colly's?"

"Colly's." Neil repeated the name hopelessly. "The giants. The big boys. It's not just that we're not getting new business, Arthur. We're losing old clients. We can't afford to lose any more."

"Is their stuff any better than ours?"

Neil smiled a little at the pride implicit in the question. "No. In fact it's not quite up to our standard. But Colly's have never bothered much with this area before. Now they're moving in—money no object, mass circularization, advertising, demonstrations, bonus schemes, cut prices; all the things we can't afford."

"Ah," Arthur growled contemptuously. "Trimmings. It still boils down to the product and the man who's selling it."

"Yes, but they're a national company, and we're just a little outfit. . . ." Neil broke off, the feeling of hopelessness again invading him. "If only we could have afforded to employ a salesman," he said quietly. "It's not my line of country."

"You've done all right."

"For a while perhaps. But look what happens as soon as there's some real competition." Neil shook his head. "I'm a technician. I should have stuck to my trade."

ARTHUR took out his matches again, looked at his pipe, and decided against it. "Your ideas were good," he said. "We've got a fine product. I could never have thought of it, but I can make it. All right. But it's no good sitting on our bottoms waiting for business men to come to us, because they won't. Someone's got to take it to them, and tell them about it. And it seems to me that you're the best man for that job, salesman or not."

Neil stubbed out his cigarette. "Sounds fine," he said. "But, barring miracles, we're finished."

Arthur digested this. He said: "Have you told Ruth?"

"No. Not yet." He looked down at his hands. "I've been doing my damnedest to keep it from her. That's not been easy . . . she's no fool. But now I must face up to it, I suppose. It isn't going to be very funny."

Arthur nodded. "She was in business, wasn't she?"

Neil laughed, without amusement. "You could put it that way. She was personal assistant to the sales director of Esterby's. It was a big job and it would have been bigger, but she gave it up—to marry me. And the joke is that, when we got married, she said she was through with business for good. She was going to be a wife and mother—and leave all the rest to me."

His expression softened. "She wanted a family. I did too. Now we've got one—and, by God, they've been good years." He looked at Arthur. "And now," he went on despairingly, "I've got to tell her that I can't run a twopenny-ha'penny company without it going broke. I've got to tell Ruth, who was responsible for a department twenty times the size of our whole set up. I tell you, Arthur, I feel like curling up in a hole."

Arthur said awkwardly: "Isn't there anything we could do?"

Neil stared out of the window. He said: "There's one faint hope. I'm going to see Edward Halliday this afternoon. He lives near Guildford, and he handles the buying for a small company there."

Arthur nodded. "I know. They're good customers."

"It's one of a group. Halliday is a director. I'm going to see if he won't buy our stuff for the whole group."

"That'll mean delivering all over the country. Overheads will go up."

"It's either that or we pack up," Neil said bluntly.

"Well, I wish you luck."

"It's a thin chance. I should like to feel that your money was intact."

"You've got far more tied up in this than I have," Arthur said. "Besides," he added mildly, "I want to find out what's going to happen."

"You're an ass," Neil said affectionately. "But I'll do my best." He glanced at his watch. "Lord, I shall miss the train. . . ."

Smoke rising above the station told him that the train was in. He slammed the car into the car park, dashed across the yard, and bought his ticket. The train was just moving off, and he had to sprint along the platform, wrench open a carriage door, and scramble in.

He went through into the corridor, and walked along it. It was the sort of beginning to a day that he hated. He felt crumpled and dishevelled, and not in the least like being urgent and convincing.

In the dining-car he sat down at a small table, hoping that no one would join him. He didn't feel like talking.

A waiter came along. "Breakfast, sir?"

"No thanks. Just a pot of tea."

The train was thundering along in earnest now, and he opened his newspaper. He was annoyed when a voice said: "Do you mind if I sit here?" He grunted, and hoped that the newcomer wouldn't talk. But the stranger said: "You are Mr. Terry, aren't you?"

Neil looked up. "Yes."

"I'm extremely pleased to meet you," said the man respectfully. "My name is Yardley."

Neil folded his newspaper. Yardley was young and immaculately dressed, with wavy hair and a strong, friendly face. He looked like a young man who had already been very successful, and had every intention of becoming much more so.

"Although we haven't met," Yardley said, "I've heard a great deal about you. In a sense"—he smiled deprecatingly—"we are competitors. I have recently been trying to open up this area on behalf of the Colly organization."

So this is what the opposition looks like, Neil thought; not a fiend with horns, but just a youngster doing his damnedest to get ahead quick.

"I must say," Yardley said in a rueful tone, "it has been very tough going. You seem to have an excellent organization and very strong connections."

Neil made appropriate noises, while wondering what on earth Yardley was talking about. Didn't he realize what an appalling proportion of sales he had cornered?

"May I offer you a cigarette?" Yardley held out his case. It was silver, Neil noted, and in

excellent, expensive taste, containing excellent, expensive cigarettes. He took a cigarette, feeling that he might as well do the Colly expense account as much damage as possible.

"I may as well tell you," Yardley said, "that I have told my head office frankly how difficult it is going to be to establish satisfactory sales in this area, when you are so strong."

Neil was beginning to suspect the real purpose behind this conversation. He said: "I'm sure there is plenty of room for both of us."

"Of course there is. On the other hand, my directors were most insistent that my sales ought to be substantially higher than they have been so far. I do hope there won't be any ill feeling between us."

Did it really matter, Neil wondered, what your executioner looked like? Could you dislike him?

"Perhaps a little real competition will be good for me," he said insincerely.

"It may be, of course"—Yardley chose his words carefully—"that we could come to some arrangement."

"In what way?"

"Well, at present we're simply cutting each

Continued on page 39

"Maybe," Yardley suggested, "we could come to some arrangement. . . . At present we're simply cutting each other's throats"

The thrilling action story of the S.A.S.—the army's master saboteurs

THESE MEN ARE DANGEROUS

by Derrick Harrison, M.C.

Colonel Stirling greets a Special Air Service patrol. Rommel regarded him as the most wanted man in North Africa, and had intelligence men flown from Germany to capture him

In Benghazi, Fitzroy Maclean bluffed enemy guards by posing as an Italian

Paddy Mayne wrecked 140 planes on the ground, sabotaging one with his bare hands

ON a hot February day when I drove along the shore of the Great Bitter Lake in Egypt the sun was high and the sand gleamed like silver. I was going to Kabrit, where, it turned out, I was to have the most extraordinary interview of my life.

The trip was an act of desperation.

I was fed up with my job; more fed up than I had ever been before. It was 1943. The North African campaign had ended, yet I was still teaching desert warfare in an army training school.

My frustration became unbearable. Then a chance acquaintance had given me hope. "Why not try to join the Special Air Service at Kabrit?" he said. "They're a tough lot, and choosy about whom they accept. But when they want someone they take him"—he snapped his fingers—"just like that."

Exactly who the S.A.S. were, and what they were doing, was apparently as great a mystery as the sphinx. My informant had heard merely that they were some sort of cloak-and-dagger unit.

It sounded extremely promising. The only thing which spoiled the excitement of my lake-side journey was the presence of Teddy Bennett, a lieutenant of the Manchesters, who was equally anxious for a new posting and had asked to come with me.

Much as I liked Bennett, I would have been happier without him that afternoon. He possessed all kinds of attributes which I did not. He was thick-set and physically impressive, whereas I was a sparely built ten stone six. He was self-assured as opposed to my more cautious nature. Also, he was a first-class linguist, while the best I could manage was some elementary French.

If any choosing were to be done, I did not fancy my chances.

We paused outside Kabrit to decide on a plan of action and agreed that when we saw Major Robert Mayne, the commanding officer of the S.A.S., the interview would go more smoothly if only one of us did the talking. Accordingly, we tossed a coin to see who would do it—and, incidentally, have the best opportunity of pleading his case.

I lost.

The interior of Mayne's tent was dark after the glare outside, but I could make out a giant of a man, immensely relaxed in an open-necked shirt and shorts, sitting at a table behind a line of washing which had been strung between the tent poles to dry.

The occasion seemed to call for an impressive salute, but the tent roof was too low. We took off our caps instead and stood uneasily to attention, waiting for him to speak. Our welcome was not encouraging. Mayne contemplated us

ILLUSTRATION BY LAURENT

A few yards away, the enemy resthouse was crowded. But Lewis drew his automatic on the Italian, and pointed to the lorry. "Get in," he said

over the top of the washing with an expression of utter disinterest.

"Well, what do you want?"

"We have come to volunteer, sir," said Bennett.

"Why do you think I could use you?"

Bennett had his cue. He launched into a carefully worded description of his own accomplishments and mine. I kept quiet, as we had arranged.

Mayne listened casually. "By the way," he asked, "do your commanding officers know you are here?"

"No," admitted Bennett.

For a moment I saw a hint of approval in Mayne's eyes—evidently we had shown the kind of independence he required—but he crushed us by saying: "I can promise nothing. I will have to speak to the other squadron commanders about you."

That was that. The interview trailed off into silence and we left, feeling thoroughly disappointed.

Three weeks later the following signal arrived at the training school: "To Lieutenant Harrison. You have been accepted for the 1st S.A.S. Regiment and an immediate posting has been applied for. You will be collected at 14.00 hours today."

There was no mention of Bennett. I could not believe it. Surely a mistake had been made. Mayne had got our names mixed. It was Bennett's posting, not mine.

But it was no mistake. I had been chosen, though I could not think why.

Only when I tackled Mayne on the subject did I know the reason for his choice. "It was simple," he said. "Bennett was unsuitable for our type of work. He talked too much."

I decided not to mention tossing that coin. . . .

The S.A.S., I soon discovered, did indeed specialize in cloak-and-dagger stuff. They were unique. More highly trained than commandos, they were the army's top craftsmen at spying and sabotage. Operations were carried out entirely behind enemy lines, often to a depth of hundreds of miles.

Also I learned that my acceptance was purely provisional. Throughout my training in the arts of stealth, machine-gunning, bomb-placing and so on, I had to reach the standard demanded. Otherwise I would be sent back to my original unit as offhandedly as I had been picked.

My future was therefore a challenge, and the more I heard about my new colleagues the more I doubted if I could earn a place among them.

There were men such as Sergeant Lilley, who had not hesitated, when he found himself trapped, to strangle an Italian sentry with his bare hands; Corporal Sillito, who was accidentally left behind after a raid, and returned to base by walking for eight days 180 miles across the desert with little food and no water; and Bob Melot—a gallant Belgian I was destined to meet many times in the months to come—who was shot through a shoulder, but got his release from hospital two days later by forging a certificate to say that he was fit for duty.

Towering above them all was Major Mayne, or Paddy, as everybody called him. An Ulsterman, a lawyer, amateur boxer and rugby player, six feet six inches tall and weighing seventeen stone, he had a reputation for boldness and keen wits which I would never have credited at the interview.

He was a veteran of many ground raids on enemy airfields. Once, when he ran out of bombs, he climbed into the cockpit of a fighter and used his enormous strength to sabotage it by wrenching out the instrument panel. He had personally wrecked about 140 German planes.

In all, the S.A.S. in North Africa had

JOHN MASTERS

writes a brilliant successor to "Bhowani Junction"

Far, far the mountain peak

This is the story of Peter Savage—a man ruthless in ambition, merciless in love—who stormed through the gentle dignity of Edwardian England and the rugged grandeur of the Himalayas. This breathtaking story . . .

BEGINS IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

destroyed more planes on the ground than the R.A.F. had in the air. Hitler's reaction to this astonishing achievement was a secret decree dated October 18, 1942. Admitting that the S.A.S. had been extremely successful, he ordered that the terror troops, as he called them, were to be "slaughtered to the last man."

With the excuse that "these men are dangerous," he further commanded that any who were captured were to be shot without trial.

Rommel defied the decree, but later, during the invasion of Europe, it resulted in the summary execution of at least thirty S.A.S. members. . . .

May, 1942, saw perhaps the coolest and most daring exploit of the regiment's desert days.

The target was Benghazi. Airfields round the town had been successfully attacked by the S.A.S., but there remained the problem of the harbour, which the Germans were using as their chief supply port.

It was decided that a patrol should enter Benghazi, mine what shipping they could and study the harbour with a view to bigger operations in the future.

A dress rehearsal was held at Suez late one evening.

Colonel David Stirling, the tall, lean and good-looking commander of the regiment at that time, drove into the dockyard in a station wagon. It had been painted grey, with a broad white stripe across the bonnet, to make it look like a German staff car. His party wore hats and forage caps, not very different from the headgear of the Afrika Korps, but the sentry at the gate did not query their identity.

Four of the patrol inflated a pair of rubber boats and paddled out to two tankers which were moored some distance from the quay. They fastened a couple of dummy limpet mines on the stern of each tanker, returned to the quay, deflated the boats and drove back to Kabrit.

The Suez authorities knew nothing about the incident until they were asked to return the mines. They did not see any humour in the request.

The raid on Benghazi was planned for the moonless night of Friday, May 21. Stirling took with him Captain Fitzroy Maclean, a dark and slim Cameron Highlander, absolutely without nerves, who is now a Member of Parliament; Captain Randolph Churchill, the son of Sir Winston; Captain Gordon Alston, who had a good knowledge of the town; and Corporals Rose and Cooper.

They set out from Alexandria, went two hundred miles along the coast to Mersa Matruh and turned south-west for a similar distance to Siwa, an oasis which was the headquarters of the Long Range Desert Group, North Africa's foremost experts in sand navigation.

From Siwa, an L.R.D.G. patrol guided them north-west into Libya, passing south of the front-line fighting and on as far as the green hills and scrub-covered moorlands of the Jebel country round Benghazi.

The convoy camped during the night of May 20 while bombers attacked the town—a prearranged raid by the R.A.F. which, it was hoped, would divert the Germans' and Italians' attention for a day or so. Next evening the S.A.S. men took leave of their guides and said they would rejoin them in twelve hours. Stirling got into the driver's seat of the station wagon, switched on the headlights and drove off on the last miles of the journey.

They had barely started, however, when a loud screeching came from beneath the vehicle. Rose crawled under the chassis to make an inspection. "The wheels are out of alignment," he reported.

Attempts to repair the fault were useless. The wagon was making as much noise as a police car siren when Stirling braked to a halt at a road block on the outskirts of Benghazi.

A sentry advanced with a tommy-gun.

"Chi va là?"

"Staff officers," said Maclean, in Italian. "We're from the front line—and in a hurry. Let us through."

The sentry hesitated. Then he pointed at the front of the wagon. "Those headlights are too bright," he said. "You'd better get them dimmed." He opened the barrier and saluted.

Maclean returned the salute. Stirling let in the clutch. The first bluff had succeeded.

An oncoming car which they passed turned round suspiciously and began to chase them, but Stirling gave it the slip by accelerating to eighty miles per hour and suddenly swerving into a side street. The pursuer roared by and was gone.

Embarrassingly loud screeching continued as they entered the Arab quarter. The noise made them feel so conspicuous that they parked the wagon a mile from the harbour. Churchill and Rose remained to have another try at making repairs. Stirling and the rest disappeared into the shadows carrying tommy-guns, a deflated boat and a kitbag of explosives.

The way to the water was through the wide, echoing streets of the European district. Just before they got to the barbed-wire fence round the harbour they met a sentry. Maclean took the initiative and spoke first.

"We have had a car accident," he said, "and this is our luggage. Any chance of getting beds in an hotel?"

"Doubt it," said the sentry, not noticing that the man to whom he spoke was wearing British

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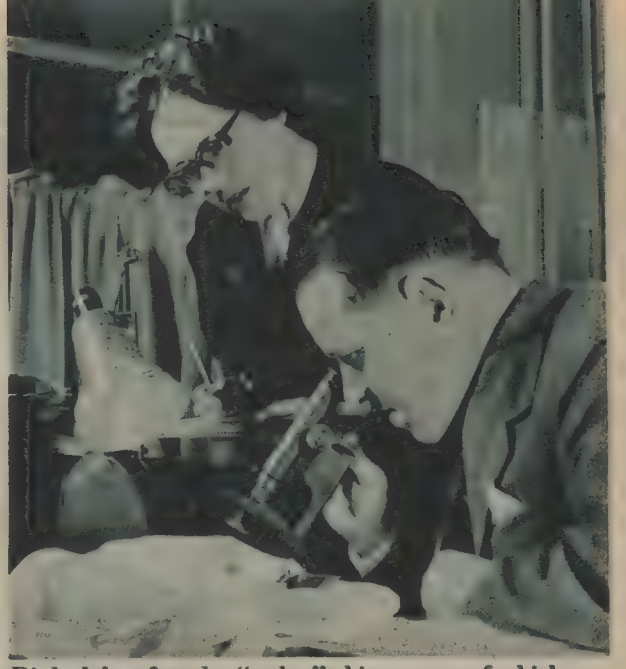
To see that housewives get a fair deal, Roger Diplock spends his life shopping. He fights fraud with his . . .

Close look at bargains

by NORMAN PHILLIPS



Diplock has found a "nylon" shirt—most of which was rayon—dye that made holes, and disintegrating collars

OUTSIDE a men's outfitters in a London suburb, Roger Diplock paused for a careful look. In the window he saw what he wanted—a new white "spun nylon" shirt. Acting the part of a casual customer, Diplock entered the shop.

"Would you have one of those 'spun nylon' shirts in my size?" he asked.

Looking over Diplock's rugger-player's build, the assistant nodded. He produced the shirt and watched unsuspectingly as his customer ran a finger around the collar marked "spun nylon."

"I'll take it," said Diplock. He paid in cash.

Instead of wearing it, Diplock sent his purchase to a laboratory. Back came the report: "The so-called 'spun nylon' is eighty-seven per cent rayon and thirteen per cent nylon."

The shirt's next public appearance was in a magistrate's court. Diplock told his story after the manufacturer had pleaded not guilty to applying a false description to the shirt.

"The case for the defence," said the magistrate, "is itself very similar to nylon. It is man-made, very hard wearing and wholly synthetic. I find the defendant company guilty." He imposed a fine of £50 and costs of £100.

The costs were awarded to the Retail Trading Standards Association, a body of merchants and manufacturers which employs Diplock under the modest title of secretary. In practice, Diplock looks and acts like the association's policeman. Weighing fourteen and a half stone, he is a one-man fraud squad who deals each year with up to a thousand allegations of unfair trading.

Complaints range from misrepresenting rayon as nylon, or feathers as down, to selling leaky rainwear or materials containing dyes that in sunlight eat through cloth. Diplock has investigated "hair" mattresses filled with fibre made from coconut husks; and imitation Persian lamb collars that disintegrated in cleaning.

To protect its members and the public, the R.T.S.A. compiles its own codes of conduct. Legal backing for some of its rules is found in the Merchandise Marks Act. Diplock deals with other breaches with co-operation from the press, government departments or Members of Parliament.

"I can smell a misleading advertisement a mile away," Diplock declared recently. "I get a feeling in my fingers at the sight of unfair trading."

Diplock's extra-sensory apparatus worked recently while he was window shopping. He spotted an offer of "wool and nylon" knitting yarn. The price was a few pence less than usual. He walked up to a counter crowded with women shoppers and bought two ounces. In the association's own laboratories, Diplock's suspicions were confirmed. There was less than three per cent nylon in the mixture. These facts, along with samples of the yarn, went to the Prosecutions Branch of the Board of Trade.

Opening his mail a few weeks ago, Diplock found a pair of nylons stamped "GRADE *A*." They contained minor flaws that classed them as sub-standards or seconds. A covering letter explained that they had been purchased by the writer at a rival's shop.

After discussing this case with R.T.S.A. experts, Diplock wrote a blunt letter to the manufacturers warning them that the association regarded this practice as a breach of the Merchandise Marks Act. He then advised all retail members of the association not to stock sub-standard stockings bearing only the mark "GRADE *A*."

"To any reasonable man or woman in the street," Diplock says, "the significance of such an expression must be exactly the opposite of imperfection."

For legal reasons, Diplock prefers shopping by post when he is on the trail of suspects. Dealing through the mail arms him with a copy of his order as well as the supplier's invoice and receipt. Writing on plain paper in his own bold script and using his home address in the country, Diplock always encloses a personal cheque. "They can't resist the sight of money," he says of dishonest traders. "Back come the goods and we're well on the way to catching them."

Diplock wrote out one order after seeing an advertisement for wool blankets at what he considered an unusually low price. The blanket arrived and proved to be only fifty-five per cent wool and the remainder rayon. In addition, it bore a label providing grounds for a second charge of which Diplock had not been aware. The label merely showed grazing sheep and contained no written description. The magistrate ruled that such a label, showing sheep alone, was a false description when applied to wool-and-rayon blankets because shoppers might be misled into thinking them all wool.

Not all the compaints made to Diplock are

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The shoe is said to be suède. If Diplock finds that it isn't, he may decide on legal action

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON

Waltzing Matilda

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT JOHNSTON, R.I., S.M.A.

Tea is almost as popular in Australia as it is here, but the Aussies like it stronger. In their homes, they make it as we do. But not the man who works in the 'out back'!

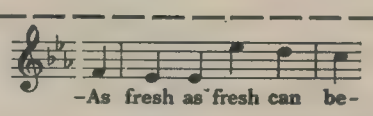
In his swag (or Matilda), the roll or bag which holds his personal possessions, he carries his beloved billy. He fills this with water to boil, throws in a good measure of tea, for strength, and allows it to boil again. Then—an old custom—he swings the billy round and round over his shoulder.

Bushmen usually have a 'sweet tooth', and add plenty of sugar—with often a gum tree leaf for its subtle flavouring. Like you, they find tea a wonderful thirst quencher, cooling in the heat, warming in the cold, a good morning freshener and a soothing night-cap.

(With grateful acknowledgement of the help given by Mr. Finley, of the Staff of the High Commissioner for Australia)

More and more people are enjoying Brooke Bond—good tea and *fresh*. Over 150 million cups of Brooke Bond tea are drunk *every day* throughout the world.

Brooke Bond have thousands of acres of their own tea gardens—more than any other firm of tea distributors in the world—with their own buyers in all the big world tea markets.



Oh, the Brooke Bond van is hurrying on its way
—with a score or more deliveries for today!
—That means there's going to be
fresh tea for you and me
—as fresh as fresh can be—**it's Brooke Bond tea!**

Brooke Bond *good tea-and FRESH!*

"Order," shouted Dai, hammering his pint pot on the table. "Let's have the best of order"

Dai Davies and the unseen power

Of course, anything can happen to a Rugby player on a Saturday night. But an apparition . . . ? by DAVY JONES

WHEN old Trevor Tarpin fell back through the door of the Bird in Hand twenty minutes after he had said his final good night nobody was surprised. Trevor was always seeing something on the way home. The Grey Lady, the Black Dog, the White Horse, had all appeared at some time or another to strike terror into his poor old heart and to send him scuttling back to the safety of the inn.

So, as he leaned against the wall trying to get his breath, white and shaking like a beech leaf, he caused only a momentary pause in the placid activity of the bar. It was Gomer Morgan who did the right thing by the old man, buying him a drop of rum, listening to the story of his ghostly visitation and then taking him home.

As soon as they had gone the disagreements started. Some supported old Trevor and the opposition thought he was a silly old fool.

Starting from a quiet word, the hubbub spread until the place was in an uproar. The cribbage game broke up in violent dissension after an accusation of over-pegging, the dart players came up from the bottom room to see the fun, and Aunty Pugh, the landlady, had to ring her ship's bell for order.

As soon as there was a lull, Dai Davies, sitting in the corner settle under the clock, hammered his pint pot on the table and shouted: "Order! Let's have the best of order," over and over again until he had quiet. Dai, a good Rugby player, was well liked; and, besides, he was a big man, so most people obeyed.

"Listen," he said. "Let me tell you of something that happened to me, and I won't expect anybody to buy me rum after."

Taking a long pull at his beer, he continued, in dead silence: "Last Saturday, as you know, we were playing Rugby at Church End, and we won—Alfie scoring a lovely try.

"After the game we went to the club house for

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ILLUSTRATED BY NORMAN MANSBRIDGE

The Days' act is one of the most spectacular and hazardous in show business. Once, when Eric slipped, his wife flew head-first into the audience

Eric Day helps his wife into Tyrolean costume. So that he can keep a firm grip on her, Day rubs resin and spirit into his hands before going on the ice

Between appearances at an ice show in Nottingham, the Days groom Ricky the poodle. Eric and Frieda live in a caravan when they tour the Continent

Dancers with ice-cold nerves

Eric and Frieda Day set out "to surprise the audience." It means risking their necks—and frightening the violinists

by DON EVERITT

THE producer planned to close the combined ice show and circus in Barcelona on the Saturday night and to open with it in Madrid the following Monday afternoon. On the previous Thursday, therefore, he sent his main refrigerating plant to Madrid. At the Barcelona show, held in a tent in the middle of the town's bull-ring, one auxiliary plant was left to keep the ice frozen for three nights.

The weather was hot. Inside the tent it was hotter. On the Friday night, when star British adagio dancers Eric and Frieda Day skated on to the six-yard-square portable rink for their last act, the ice was soft.

The couple struggled through the worsening conditions to their finale. Eric Day spun round at increasing speed holding his wife by one foot and swinging her up and down, now above his head, now only inches from the ice. As he reached maximum momentum, his skates fouled a patch of sand left on the ice by one of the earlier circus acts. He fell backwards; his wife flew head-first towards the audience.

Through experience, Frieda Day has mastered the art of falling. She landed at the feet of the people in the front row, picked herself up and climbed back into the rink.

"On the Saturday night," says Eric Day, "we had no ice in the rink, only sand and the refrigeration pipes. The skaters performed without skates, in slippers, dancing pumps, high-heeled shoes. In ice shows on tour overseas, the performers—and sometimes the public—have to contend with an assortment of difficulties."

In the last eight years, the Days have performed in ice shows in fifteen countries. By car and caravan they have covered 160,000 miles in Europe alone.

Even under ideal conditions, the Days perform what must rank as one of the most spectacular and hazardous acts in show business. Balanced on her husband's hands high above his head, Frieda Day strikes ballet and acrobatic poses while he skates around the ice. In various high-speed spins she swings through the air with only one foot caught between his head and his upraised arm. Their performances, which make the term adagio seem a misnomer, have brought them an international reputation, star ranking, several appearances on British television and an assortment of injuries.

"When we teamed up and went into the ice show business ten years ago," says Day, "we wanted to be different. Much pair-skating looks slow and unattractive because the skaters take time putting themselves in the correct position for each new movement. We decided to try to dispense with this preparation and to surprise the audience all the time." This called for more power in their act without loss of timing or grace.

At Morecambe on one occasion, they moved a fraction too soon into a spin in which they crouch facing each other and holding hands. "There was not an atom of centrifugal force between us, nothing to keep the spin going." In desperation Eric pulled one of Frieda's arms. Unprepared, she flew across his chest. They picked themselves up and continued the act only to find their clothes and the ice streaked with blood. Eric had felt no pain but the heel of his wife's skate had torn a deep gash six inches long in his chest.

If Frieda slips, Eric grips her harder —"Sometimes you've got to be brutal"

So that Day can keep a firm grip on his wife on the ice, she wears no costumes made of satin, and before every performance he rubs on to his hands resin and spirit to make them tacky. In *Puss In Boots On Ice* at Bradford, Day, as principal boy, had a sword fight with a giant. At one point, the giant knocked the sword out of his hand. One evening the ice was wet, and as Day retrieved his sword the wet handle spoiled the resin on his hands.

After beating the giant, he went into a dance of triumph with his wife, the principal girl. This ended with the spin in which he holds Frieda by one foot. No sooner had they begun to gyrate than Day felt his wife's boot slipping out of his grasp. He could not stop it. Frieda sailed across the stage and landed in the orchestra pit. She picked herself out of a tangle of broken violins and battered violinists and went back on to the stage. She says: "I'm not made of teak; I was just born lucky."

Frieda caused her worst injury herself. In one lift in which Eric holds her by the waist above his head, she makes a scissor-like movement with her legs. One night, the sharp heel of her left skate struck her right boot and entered her foot. Unable to separate her feet, she screamed in agony, but Eric could not hear her above the applause. When he lowered her on to the ice again, he saw from her face that something was wrong. He skated with her to the wings, then finished the act alone. Afterwards, he learned that she had broken a bone in her big toe. It kept her off the ice for a week.

Some time ago, Day suffered an injury in a dressing-room: his wife kicked him with her skates on. "If things don't go too well on the ice," she says, "we're not nice to know for a few minutes afterwards." On this particular occasion, Eric had felt his wife slipping as he held her aloft during the act: he had gripped her waist harder than usual. "Sometimes you've got to be brutal," he says. "The act has got to work." In the dressing-room Frieda got her own back.

The Days have both skated since childhood. Frieda May Wheatley, the daughter of a Nottingham butcher, would have become a ballerina if her mother had had her way, but at the age of four she went to the local ice rink and thereafter her ballet lessons took second place. In 1947, having just won the National Skating Association's silver dance medal, she met Eric George Day at Richmond ice rink.

An electrical engineer, he had clear-cut ambitions of finding an attractive skating partner with whom he could turn professional. Previously, he had won awards as a speed skater and had taught at Streatham ice rink. He put his plans to Frieda and they became partners.

By 1950, the originality of their style began to pay dividends: they secured leading rôles in an ice show at Morecambe. In the meantime the couple had married and, "with great help from Frieda's mother," had weathered periods of unemployment. They called themselves professionally "Erik and Frieda."

A South African colleague at Morecambe recommended the Days to an ice-show promoter in Johannesburg. They went there early in 1951, and since then have starred in shows in Britain and throughout Western Europe.

DAY, who says he is in his early thirties and his wife in her late twenties, wears a toupé when he appears on the ice to hide a prematurely receding hairline. He says: "The principal boy or the hero is never thin on top."

He is the choreographer in the partnership. He and his wife have found that they have to cater to national tastes on the Continent.

"In Spain," says Frieda, "the more I'm thrown about, the nearer I get to some grievous injury, the better they like it. In Germany, people don't want the acrobatics. They like their waltzes with skating to match. In France, the audiences want ballet in the skating."

The Days have found that working abroad has hazards off the ice as well as on it. On the voyage to South Africa in 1951, one of the skating lifts which have brought Frieda Day so many cuts and bruises rescued her from an unpleasant experience. She and her husband went for a bathe in the swimming pool of the liner, Capetown Castle. Unable to swim, she stayed at the shallow end. Without warning, the ship started to roll violently and the wash in the pool swept Frieda off her feet. As she struggled to stand up again, a strong pair of hands grasped her ankles and raised her clear out of the water. In best ballet style, she reached the side of the pool. THE END

I will remember...

by ***RICHARD CLAPPERTON***

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARDS

The past was precious to Uncle Cy . . . too precious. It seemed to be worth any sacrifice—even a woman's love

Uncle Cy was standing in the mi

THIRTY years ago, when he was nineteen, Uncle Cy left Manchester and went to Australia, where, through the years, he built up a dairy farm in Ngarla, North Queensland. Nobody in our family heard much from him in that time because, Dad claimed, he was never the writing kind.

The only time he wrote was when my mother died. Then a few years later, when Dad passed away, he wrote again, suggesting that I join him on the farm.

"The boy will learn something here," he wrote to my Aunt Jane. "Get him off on the first boat."

Aunt Jane, a widow, had enough worries over keeping herself, without having me on her hands. So she agreed and late that year, in the middle of summer and a few days before my fourteenth birthday, I arrived in Sydney. Uncle Cy was waiting for me. We had lunch in town; then later in the afternoon we caught the North Coast express for Ngarla.

Uncle Cy wasn't the hearty, laughing old man I had thought he would be, and at first glance he seemed sloppily dressed. Later I learned that the white, open-necked shirt, faintly creased flannels and rubber sandals were a Queensland farmer's Sunday best. The day after we arrived at his farm in Ngarla I saw him in working dress —faded vest, khaki shorts stained with oil, grease and sweat, dirty grey tennis shoes without laces, and an old digger hat turned down, with the top torn open like a can lid.

Queenie Wilson, the widow who ran the Ngarla main store and post office, told me he'd dressed like that for as long as she remembered. "But don't you go thinkin' he's a crackpot," she said aggressively. "He's respected all right. His word's better than anybody else's here, so you should be proud of your Uncle Cy. What's more, he built the first silo in these parts—before you were born."

Queenie, I knew then, was very proud of Uncle Cy.

Once a week she came out to the farm with the cream carrier and stayed a few hours before the carrier picked her up on his return. She invariably brought a cake she'd made herself, and the mail. Queenie was about the same age as Uncle Cy—probably a few years younger, from the way he called her "girl."

Usually on her visits she'd wind up helping him milk the cows. I used to watch them while they worked. They would hardly ever speak to each other, and Uncle Cy never addressed her by name, but treated her with quiet respect.

After they had let the cows into the paddock, they'd go into the shade of the grain shed and drink a glass of Uncle Cy's home brew. In a quiet, unhurried way, they'd discuss the cows, or the weather, or the forthcoming agricultural show in Ngarla, and Queenie would nod without saying anything. They had known each other for years and had long ago dispensed with all pretences.

I wasn't sure about the relationship between Uncle Cy and Queenie till one day when Uncle Cy took me to the agricultural show at Ngarla. While he was in the ring attending to one of his exhibits, a man spoke to me from the cabin of a truck.

"You're Cy's brother's boy?" he said, grinning.

"Yes," I said.

"How's Cy gettin' on with Queenie Wilson?"

"Mrs. Wilson?" I said, surprised. "Oh, all right, I suppose."

"Mean they ain't even married yet?"

"No," I said, not knowing what he was talking about. "Not yet." The man laughed pleasantly and drove away.

Next morning at breakfast I said: "There was a man at the show yesterday asking if you were going to marry Mrs. Wilson."

Uncle Cy stirred his tea, tapped the spoon on the cup rim, and placed it in the saucer.

"Who asked you that, boy?" he asked quietly.

I said I didn't know.

"Well, never you mind what he said, boy," he told me. And he didn't mention the subject again.

Later that afternoon, while he was down on the flat bringing in the cows, I wandered up to the silo. I'd never been this far from the house before because Uncle Cy had warned me about snakes. The silo, a tall, white, circular building, like an armless windmill, was on a hill behind the work shed. Beyond it there seemed to be nothing but wild lantana and tall yellow grass, bleached by the sun.

I went behind the silo along a dying path. It had been used a long time ago; the grass was shorter, greener than the surrounding foliage. I walked slowly, watching for snakes, then presently came to a clearing about a hundred yards from the silo.

In the middle of the clearing there was a hut—or rather the skeleton of a hut. All that remained of it were lopsided poles lashed together with rope which had decayed and was now as weak as grass. An old iron stove was half-sunk in the earth to one side, and out of one of the holes in it protruded a stack of old and yellowed newspapers.

Carefully, I picked my way over some fallen poles and a heap of smelly, rancid sacking. I picked up the newspapers and almost screamed. A huge tarantula spider scurried out from among them and then disappeared again.

I pushed my hands in my pockets and read, on one of the papers: *January 19, 1936,* and there was a picture of King George—the one with the beard—on the front page.

I turned away and looked around me. An old, weather-bleached sideboard lay askew, with rusty knives and forks in the grass, obviously fallen out of an open drawer.

I was going to examine the newspapers further

sh garden

our house a setting
r home—in town or country

AMONG the loveliest corners of many English gardens is the rose walk—not difficult to make, but so effective.

Larch or conifer poles nine feet high, sunk two feet into the ground and nailed with a crossbar, make the arches. Climbing roses to choose from are in three groups: (1) upright growers, mainly suited to walls and single pillars; (2) fairly stiff upright growers for large pillars, pergolas, arches and fences; (3) Wichuraiana, the true rambler, which will trail beautifully over arches and trellises. But representatives of each group may be used.

Among the most popular—and among the best—of the ramblers are Dorothy Perkins (brilliant rose pink), Excelsa (bright crimson flowers in large clusters) and Alberic Barbier (pure yellow buds opening to creamy white). Adelaide d'Orleans (pinky-white flowers with golden centres), and Minnehaha (rose pink) are two other fine varieties.

In the second group are American Pillar (deep rose flowers), Blushing Lucy (very late flowering), Goldfinch (soft yellow), Seven Sisters (mauvish pink) and New Dawn (exquisite shell pink). Three climbers to use are Allen Chandler (scarlet), Climbing Caroline Testout (one of the best scented roses), and the flesh-pink Climbing Ophelia.

The path beneath the rose arches can be bordered with small rockery stones and low-growing plants such as pinks, geum, nepeta and stachys lanata (lamb's ear). The background space between each arch can be filled with taller herbaceous plants.

COTTAGE gardens like this can look equally effective in the town or country. The yellow eschscholtzia (California poppy) is prominent in the foreground—so are Peruvian lilies, and the herbaceous perennial phlox. But the range of plants which go well in these gardens is limitless. Herbaceous perennials and hardy annuals thrive happily together so long as they have plenty of sunshine.

Useful perennials of varying sizes, to have in a mixed flower bed, include hollyhock, delphinium, paeony, verbascum, pyrethrum, heuchera, clarkia, pansy and gypsophila.

Here are a few choice varieties: phlox (Sir John Falstaff, large salmon-pink flowers), solidago (Lemore, a soft primrose yellow), papaver (Border Beauty, a large glowing red), chrysanthemum (Wirral Supreme, white), kniphofia, the red hot poker (Watkin Samuel, orange scarlet), gaillardia (Wirral Flame, blood-red flowers with yellow-tipped petals), and the new hyacinth-flowered varieties of foxglove, which flower all round the stem instead of on one side only.

Annuals to mix with the perennials include the lupin, lavatera, godetia, mignonette, love-in-a-mist.

Whether planted at the back or the front of a house, a mixed flower garden makes a wonderful display—one that deserves to be shared. In a front garden, especially, a simple wooden fence, rather than a hedge, permits the flowers to be viewed from the street—and allows sunshine and air to enter.

two birds with one stone. But whatever you do, wash out the watering-can thoroughly after use. Weed killer murders other plants just as effectively. It will kill weeds at the base of shrubs, but any of the liquid which touches leaves on a shrub will kill the shrub.

THE WELFARE OF THE LAWN depends upon acceptance of the fact that grass is a plant. It needs air, like other plants, and too much heavy rolling will stifle it; it uses up plant food in order to grow, and you cannot expect to keep cutting the grass, thus stimulating growth, without putting something back into the soil.

Branded lawn fertilizers are numerous. If the lawn is on a heavy clay soil, domestic ashes, sieved, spread thinly and rolled in, will be beneficial. A light sprinkling of wood ash is good for all lawns, but if the grass has become really thin, grass seed—one pound to a large pan of soil—should be added.

An hour or two spent on the lawn in April will pay dividends later. Worm casts should be scattered with a besom or hard broom and this should be followed by a thorough raking to disturb any mosses growing with the grass. Lawn fertilizer can be added—two ounces for each square yard, mixed with an equal amount of fine soil or sand.

BEDDING PLANTS can make a colourful, though temporary, flower garden quickly. Popular ones, such as geraniums, salvias, lobelia, alyssum, stocks, asters, zinnias and antirrhinum should be bought. Planted out, 9 in. apart, at the end of May, they will grow and flower until the frost kills them off.

HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS cost no more than bedding plants to buy and are more economical. They will flower year after year. Also, they are planted in their permanent beds at least 18 in. apart, so fewer are required to fill a border.

Two tall herbaceous plants (about 2s. each) suited to the back of the border are monarda, or bergamot (scarlet, pink and purple flowers: July-October), and salvia virgata nemerosa (violet blue: July-September).

Slightly smaller varieties: scabious the pincushion flower (I recommend Clive Greaves, powder blue: May-October), rudbeckia speciosa (orange-yellow with a black cone, 1s. 9d.), pyrethrums (white, pink, carmine, crimson, single and double flowered: May-June), and aquilegia, or columbine, particularly the long-spurred hybrid variety, with its characteristic spurs which resemble a humming bird (May-June).

Two plants suited to very small gardens or the front of borders are tradescantia (white, blue, purple, June-September), and nepeta, or catmint (pale blue, May-September).

ONE of the most beautiful views in all the Midlands in June is to be seen at a nursery alongside the main Shrewsbury to Wolverhampton road. When I pass the spot on my journeys from Shrewsbury to London to do my TV broadcasts, I often stop to admire the wonderful colours of acres of Russell lupins. As these begin to fade, blue, purple, mauve and white delphiniums planted beyond burst into glorious bloom.

Planted in conjunction with herbaceous phlox, lupins and delphiniums give colour from May to September.

Add some of the newer varieties of Michaelmas daisy, and colour will continue into November.

Phlox is a back-of-the-border plant, and many well-established varieties are available in beautiful colours for as little as 2s. a plant; but should you have money to spare, I strongly recommend that you try Fairy's Petticoat (delicate soft mulberry, with a slightly deeper centre) or Lilac Time, a very vigorous variety with clear lilac flowers. These new introductions cost 8s. or 10s. each, but they are an improvement in colour, size of the head of the flower, and in the size of the individual pips.

Herbaceous plants should be planted out in February, March or early April. First the ground should be dug or forked over. Remember that all herbaceous plants except lupin, which prefer a soil which is not too rich, appreciate a dressing of peat (about 30s. for a 2-cwt. bale) or hop manure (6s. 9d. for 14 lb.), plus bone meal (£2 a hundredweight; two to four ounces—just a good handful—are sufficient for each square yard of soil).

GROWING FROM SEED is the cheapest method of having a herbaceous border. Russell lupins (though not named varieties), delphiniums, aquilegia, anthemis, campanula the bell flower, dianthus, or pinks, gaillardia, geum (a dwarf grower which flowers in red and yellow: May-October), heuchera (pink, salmon, red), and linum, can all be purchased in small packets, each containing enough seed to grow thirty or forty plants.

The best time for sowing is in May—and usually it is false economy to buy the cheapest seeds. An extra sixpence a packet, spent on reliable strains from a good source, is seldom wasted.

Fork the soil over, tread it down firm, then rake it fine. Sprinkle the seeds in V-shaped trenches about ½ in. deep, and label the rows for future reference.

Before transplanting into your nursery bed, in July, use a little general fertilizer; 14 lb., for 7s., will treat 112 sq. yd. of soil. The young plants should be left in the nursery bed, 6 to 8 in. apart, until the following February, when the third operation—transplanting into permanent beds, 18 to 24 in. apart—is carried through.

ANNUALS FROM SEED can be used to brighten up the garden during the twelve months in which perennials are growing from seed. An acquaintance told me that when he was a boy his father gave him the garden at the front of the house to tend. He bought a few sixpenny packets of hardy annual seeds and in April scattered them at random over his plot. By June the garden was a blaze of colour—the envy of the avenue.

The professional way is to rake the bed or border over and then, with a pointed stick, trace in the fine soil patches of different sizes and shape, which will eventually blossom into patches of selected colour. You then sprinkle the seeds on the soil, as you wish them to grow, and rake them in.

HARDY ANNUAL PLANTS sown any time from March to early May grow quickly, flower from June to October, then seed and die.

I recommend the following varieties of hardy annual plants, some of which are recent introductions:

Coronarium Golden Crowns (1s. 3d. a packet), a glorious golden double-quilled variety of annual chrysanthemum, or W. E. Gladstone (bright coppery scarlet), which like most chrysanthemums has single flowers; Elegans Choice Hybrids (1s. 6d.), a clarkia which produces large double flowers with long graceful sprays; and Sensation Gloria, a very early flowering cosmea with large, well-shaped flowers coloured rose, with deep crimson zones.

All of these grow 2 to 4 ft. high, and the cosmea, with its daisy-like flowers and fern-like foliage, is particularly suited to the back of the border. You may like to ring the changes, too, with varieties of annual delphinium, or larkspur, annual scabious, and amaranthus caudatus (love-lies-bleeding) with its long tassels.

One of my favourite medium-sized annuals (1 to 2 ft. high) is Radio, an old variety of calendula, the garden marigold. It is deep orange, has quilled petals, flowers freely, is hardy, and grows easily.

A more recent variety is called Orange Cockade.

Other varieties worth a try are anchusa (like a forget-me-not), clary, or bluebeard, which has lovely bracts growing off the stems, dimorphotheca, or Star of the Veldt (orange, salmon and pink), and Godetia Sybil Sherwood, a salmon pink, which is probably the best.

Varieties measuring 12 in. or less, when they are fully grown, include Hyacinth Flowered White, a recently introduced candy-tuft, Jubilee Jem—not the newest, but still the best, cornflower—minor Royal Ensign (bright blue with a white centre), an "old faithful" convolvulus, and Monarch Artshades, a satisfactory strain of eschscholtzia (California poppy).

Nothing is nicer than to be greeted in the garden in the cool of a summer's evening, by the perfume of such a plant as night-scented stock. Its flower is rather insignificant, but at night its sweet scent is a delight, and it can be sown inconspicuously in the shelter of shrubs and trees.

Gardeners who try to please only the eye miss a great deal. I make a point of planting a clump of mignonette, preferably near to the garden seat. Another scented plant is nicotiana, a white or crimson half-hardy annual which, planted at the end of May, is guaranteed to give the weakest nose a treat.

ROSE BUSHES may not be cheap, but few gardeners worth their salt can resist having some—either Floribundas, which, with their clusters of flowers, give the most colourful and lasting display, or the lovely hybrid tea roses, which are beloved by the connoisseur.

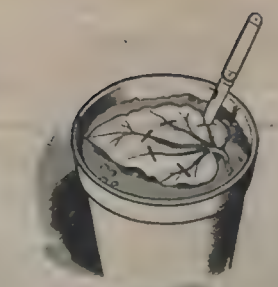
Recently introduced Floribundas include Masquerade (4s. to 5s. each). This has golden yellow buds with tiny vermillion marks. The centre bud in each cluster opens first, rose pink as the petals unfold, but then gradually deepens to deepest red. Each succeeding bloom follows the same cycle, providing a glorious contrast of colour on each bush.

Yellow Hammer, a very new rose (10s. 6d.), Frensham (deep crimson, 4s. 6d.), Rosemary Rose (red, 6s. 6d., the only scented Floribunda rose), Aso Fashion (lovely salmon orange, 4s. 6d.), Border Queen (scarlet, 4s. 6d.), and Pompon Beauty (scarlet or crimson, with compact flowers, 5s.) are all worth buying.

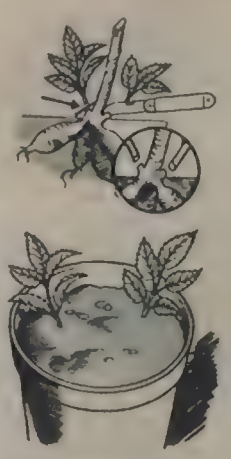
HYBRID TEA ROSES are always appearing in new varieties, but I recommend Josephine Bruce (5s.), which is among the finest of red roses, American Mojave (7s. 6d.), red with a golden reverse to its petals, The Queen (copper, 6s.), Lydia (golden yellow, 4s. 6d.) and Margaret (peach pink, 6s.).

JAPANESE MAPLE is a beautiful foliage shrub which you may like to buy in a rash moment. It costs 18s. 6d. Some that are obtainable for 5s. are: rhus Cotinus (purple-bronze), euonymus radicans (yellow and green variegated), senecio Grevii and santolma incarna (silver).

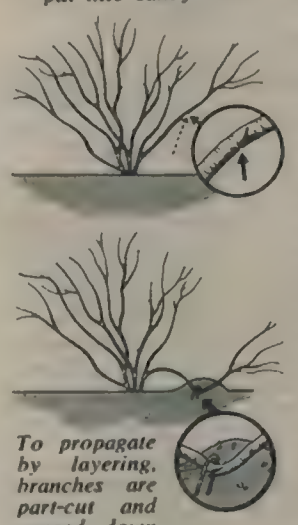
My favourite shrubs, which produce flowers and berries in addition to autumn tints, are: cotoneaster horizontals (white flowers in May, plus



Begonia rex can be propagated by cuts made in leaf ribs



Dahlia shoots are cut off and then put into sandy soil



To propagate by layering, branches are part-cut and pegged down

DO IT WITH

PROPAGATION

THERE are many ways to propagate plants, and save money. One of the simplest is to divide plants such as polyanthus, primula, and auriculas after flowering. May or June is the best time to lift these plants, and divide them into separate crowns, each with a root attached. The crowns should then be replanted, 9 in. apart.

Saintpaulia, begonia rex, gloxinia, streptocarpus, peperomia, and the fleshy leaves of many other succulent plants can be propagated from leaf cuttings in a greenhouse, in the spring and summer.

Example: For begonia rex cut off the leaf within about 2 in. of the main stem; cut with a sharp knife through the midribs; now put the leaf flat on its underside, on sandy soil in a pot; in the next four to six weeks, roots will thrust into the soil from the cuts. One leaf can produce six plants, which should be placed in separate pots.

For saintpaulia, cut leaves from the plant, leaving 1 in. of stem, and insert the stems slantwise into sandy soil. Roots and buds will form at the base of the root stem.

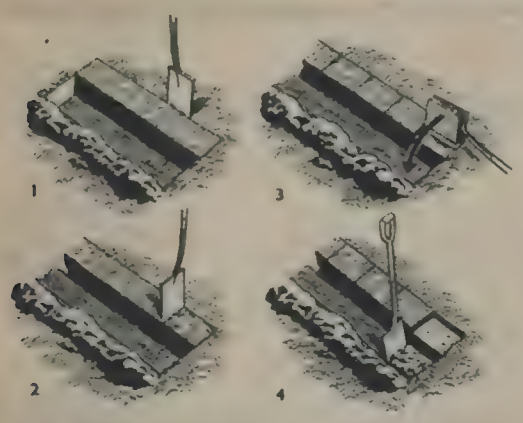
There is spring-time greenhouse work in the propagation of fuchsia, geranium, chrysanthemum, coleus, verbena, heliotrope, carnation, dahlia and begonia from cuttings. Example: dahlia shoots should be cut off near the base of the stem, and put in pots of sandy soil in a propagating frame.

March or April is not too late to layer shrubs such as viburnum, flowering currants, honeysuckle, clematis, forsythia, magnolia, rhododendron, heather, cotoneaster, chaenomeles and the fruits loganberry and blackberry. Carnation should not be layered until July.

To layer, make an upward slanting cut into a branch of the shrub, bend the branch down to ground level, though still attached to the shrub, and secure it with a wire or wooden peg. Cover with soil and leave until roots form. In the autumn, the branch can be cut completely away from the shrub and planted as a shrub in its own right.

Others methods of propagation: From bud cuttings (spring and summer)—camellia, ficus (India-rubber plant); root cuttings (autumn and winter)—seakale, anchusa, phlox (herbaceous), primula denticulata, raspberry, gaillardia, romneya; cuttings (July-November)—most shrubs including conifers and other evergreens, and roses, gooseberries, and red, black and white currants; division of the dormant roots (November-April)—Michaelmas daisy, helenium, solidago, delphinium, lupin, phlox, monarda, lily-of-the-valley, dahlia; propagation by bulb scales (November-March)—lilium; by budding on to rootstock (July-August)—rose, apple, pear, peach, nectarine, plum, lilac, cherry; by grafting on to rootstock (spring)—apple, pear, plum, cherry, peach, nectarine, lilac, rhododendron, camellia; propagation by runners (summer)—strawberry, violet, androsace, saxifraga sarmentosa; Alpines by small rosettes pulled off or by offsets (June-August)—saxifraga, sedum, sempervivum; Alpines by cuttings (May-August)—aubrietia, phlox, thymus, dianthus, rock rose.

EASE—AND SAVE MONEY



The professional way to turn rough field grass—in four simple stages

WORKING THE SOIL

IN a garden the most essential tool is the spade. It implies hard work but, if it is kept clean, and the blade is pushed into the soil vertically, the labour is eased. Do not try to lift too much soil with each spadeful.

Many a gardener is faced at the start with rough field grass which he must turn and bury. The professional method is first to dig a trench the width of the spade; then nick out a line in the grass parallel to the trench and a spade's width away. Now the turf is nicked across again at spade's-width intervals, and it is a simple job to pare off the turf with the spade and throw it into the trench. The soil beneath the uprooted turf can be dug and thrown on top of the buried turf, filling the original trench but making another. And so the process is repeated.

Heavy or poor soil should be turned in November with a spade and left in large clumps for the frost to break down. This more than halves the work of making a seed bed in the spring.

Heavy soils are usually rich in plant foods. When they are turned, they normally require the addition of straw, leaves or bulky garden compost, plus a little lime after digging is done.

Basic slag is the best artificial manure for heavy soils. Like lime, four ounces cover one square yard. Also like lime, concentrated or bag manures should not be dug deep into the soil—just sprinkled on the surface. If a complete fertilizer containing nitrogen, potash and phosphate is used, two ounces per square yard is enough, and on no account must the substance be allowed on the stems or foliage of growing crops.

Light soils often lack plant foods and lose moisture quickly. They are easier to work, but require plenty of humus-forming substances such as well-decayed manure, garden compost, peat, leaf mould or even hop manure. They should be cultivated in the late winter or early spring.

Far too many town gardens are spoiled by the use of fire ash, which makes light soil too light.

PRUNING

PRUNING roses, shrubs, trees, and fruit goes on all the year round, but some pruning calls for immediate attention. For instance, some people claim earlier and better flowers from the winter pruning of roses; but I prefer to prune them at the end of March.

Floribundas and hybrid tea roses should be cut back, leaving 9 to 12 in., and 6 in. respectively, of the previous year's growth.

I like to cut the hybrid teas above a strong bud, preferably one pointing away from the centre of the bush.

The flowering shoots of climbing roses should be pruned, in March or April, to within an inch of the main stem; rambler roses, however, are not pruned until November when they have flowered. Then the entire flowering shoot should be cut back.

In general, those shrubs which flower on the current year's growth should be pruned in March, while the pruning of those which flower on the previous year's growth needs to be left until they have flowered.

The first group includes buddleia, hydrangea paniculata, caryopteris clandonensis, hardy fuchsia, clematis of the jackmanii type, ceanothus and hypericum; the second group includes forsythia, winter jasminum, flowering currant, prunus triloba, lavender, chimonanthus fragrans, heather, philadelphus, lilac, and broom.

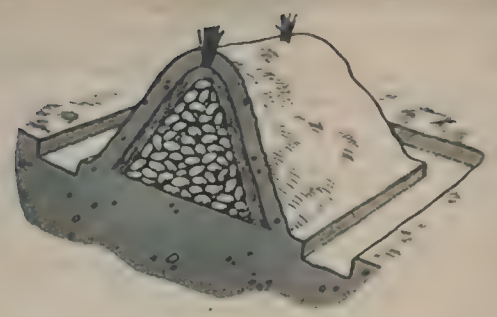
Here is the method of pruning: in March, cut back the previous year's growth to within 3 in. of the old wood (though I recommend cutting hardy fuchsias to within an inch of the ground); after flowering, thin out the old flowering growths, leaving the strongest and cutting back the others to within 2 in. of where growth began.

It is particularly important to prune shrubs like the dogwood (cornus), yellow-twigged willow and whitewash bramble, which are grown mainly for their coloured twigs.

By omitting to do this in the spring, half of their colour and beauty is lost.

Far too many bush and standard fruit trees bearing either apples, pears, plums, cherries, or damsons are ruined by over pruning. It is quite sufficient to thin the branches, where necessary, to admit light and air.

Prune fuchsia close to the ground (left): buddleia branches are cut near the base



A potato-storage clamp is easy to make in the garden

STORING

USUALLY, there is no need to discard the bulbs or corms of plants growing in bowls as soon as they have flowered, in late February or March. They can be planted again in the autumn.

After they have flowered, such plants as the daffodil, hyacinth, tulip, crocus, grape hyacinth and snowdrop should be watered regularly—or placed in a shallow trench in the garden with only their tops showing above the soil. When their foliage dies down, the bulbs or corms should be exposed to the wind and the sun to dry, and stored in a cool, airy place until the autumn. Those growing in the garden, in positions where they will not be disturbed by other cultivation, may be left for three or four years before they are separated.

The following plants should be lifted in November and stored in a frost-proof place until April: gladiolus, freesia (outdoor flowering), chincherinchee, dahlia, begonia and gloxinia.

Storing fruit and vegetable for winter use is also worth while. The best varieties of apple to store are: dessert—Cox's Orange Pippin, Blenheim Orange, Ribston Pippin, Laxton's Superb; cooking—Newtown Wonder, Lane's Prince Albert, Bramley's Seedling.

Do not pick the apples until they are thoroughly ripe, then store them—preferably in trays or boxes—in a cool shed or cellar where there is some humidity. Pears prefer drier conditions.

Potatoes can be stored in a heap in a shed, with straw or sacking over them, or in clamps in the garden. To build a clamp, pile the potatoes in a ridge-shaped heap. Cover the heap with four inches of straw, leaving a vertical chimney of straw at the top to act as a ventilator. Then dig a drainage trench round the clamp, and pile the earth from the trench over the clamp to a depth of 6 in.

Beetroot and carrots, lifted in September or early October, are best preserved in moist sand in a dark, frost-proof shed. Remove the beetroot leaves with a sharp twist—don't cut them off, or the beetroot will bleed and the colour be spoiled.

Beetroot should be placed in layers in the sand, and carrots with their crowns outward. In both cases, a final protection of sacking or straw can be added.

Onions must be fully ripe and have their tops completely dry before they are stored. Otherwise they will not keep. They should be strung together and hung in a cool airy place safe from frost. Leeks, celery and parsnips can be left in the ground during the winter. Runner beans should be picked before they turn stringy, then sliced and packed in earthenware or large glass jars with alternate layers of block salt.

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bright scarlet berries in the autumn), spiraea japonica Anthony Waterer (pinkish crimson flowers: from July), forsythea intermedia (bright yellow flowers: March-April), hypericum patulum Henryi (golden-yellow poppy-like flowers: summer and autumn) and hydrangea paniculata grandiflora, which flowers in the summer and passes through a colour sequence of greenish white, blue and white, and pinkish to purple. None of these will become too big for the average garden.

Finally, a few evergreens—juniper Sabina, cupressus Lawsoniana aurea, cupressus Fletcheri (soft, feathery, bluish-grey foliage), and berberis Darwinii, an evergreen although it has orange flowers in May and coral berries in the autumn. This, like berberis Thunbergii atropurpurea (wine-purple foliage and yellow flowers in the spring) is an ideal flowering shrub for the front of the hedge.

HEDGES round the unfenced garden of a new house are most important. Fences and walls are expensive, but a good formal hedge can be grown fairly cheaply.

Although privet is the best-known hedging plant, it is extremely hungry and fills the ground on either side with fibrous roots. It also needs trimming three or four times a year.

If you must plant privet, try planting quickthorn or hawthorn with it, to give the hedge more substance. Quickthorn is one of the best hedging plants. It requires trimming only twice a year, and although it is not an evergreen, it does not look completely bare in the winter. Young plants up to 2 ft. high can be bought for as little as 40s. a hundred. They should be planted 18 in. apart in double rows, with a foot of space between the rows.

Laurels will never make a good hedge, and yew and holly take ages to grow. Beech can be attractive and only needs trimming once, in late July.

It carries golden brown leaves during the winter, but sheds them in the spring—an irritating habit when the rest of the garden is looking tidy.

A very fine evergreen is the Lawson cupressus, but for most pockets the price of the plants—4s. to 5s. each—is prohibitive.

The Floribunda roses Karen Poulsen and Else Poulsen, which are red and pink respectively, and grow 3 or 4 ft. high, can also be used for hedging.

WALL fruit is something that many householders ignore. They think that climbing trees must make the walls of their houses damp and harbour insects. In fact this is seldom the case. It is not even necessary to drive nails into your wall. Galvanized wire to guide trees or creepers can be attached to metal pins called "holdalls," which do not harm a wall.

Although creepers like ampelopsis and ivy will damage guttering, pipes, and tiles unless kept within bounds, fruit trees are harmless.

Fan-trained trees to choose are peach or nectarine (facing south or south-west), morello cherry (north-facing), and plum or sweet cherry (east or west). Cordon-trained apple and pear trees costing 10s. or 12s. each should be planted 3 ft apart at an angle of 45 degrees. The reflected heat from the wall will give the fruit high colour and a very good quality. Another attractive apple or pear tree is the espalier.

SOFT FRUIT is something I am always being asked about. When people ask me which sort I think they should grow I invariably suggest raspberries (try Malling Promise, 9s. a dozen) and blackcurrants (a new variety is Wellington XXX, 2s. 6d. or 3s.). The raspberries, which should be planted between 18 in. and 2 ft. apart, should not be allowed to fruit in the first year. The blackcurrents need planting 4 to 5 ft. apart.

EARLY POTATOES are the only ones which I consider worth the space in a private garden. March is not too early to plant a few rows. Arran Pilot is a popular choice, but I am fond of Sharpe's Express, which is a good, but older variety. Potatoes appreciate a well-worked soil.

An early start should also be made with peas, which should be sown at intervals of two to three weeks between March and early June. As the early peas are cleared away, a winter green crop can replace them.

In a small vegetable garden I would plan to grow peas, runner beans, carrots and beetroot for a succession of fresh vegetables during the summer, with lettuce between the rows, and cabbage savoy, brussels sprouts, broccoli and leeks for winter use when vegetables are scarce and expensive.

The soil for a vegetable garden must be well dug over, and with the exception of the part devoted to carrots, the addition of manure, compost, or manure substitute, is necessary.

A GARDEN FOR TWO GUINEAS is an attractive thought for any householder. If you start a garden from seed in a place like Shrewsbury, where the average frontage of a semi-detached house measures 30 to 35 ft., and the length of the land is 120 ft., it is possible to make an ornamental garden—excluding the lawn, fancy paths and so on—for 42s. This figure comprises 15s. for peat or hop manure, 6s. for bone meal, 6s. for a general fertilizer, 8s. for a wide selection of perennial seeds—and 7s. worth of annuals into the bargain.

Make yours a typical Englis

With a lily pond, a rose walk, or flower displays massed informally you can give y
of beauty. A garden designed in one of these styles will bring delight to you

THIS garden, apart from its beauty, illustrates three points—how a pool can become the focal point of a garden, how to make the best use of sloping ground, and how to achieve a spontaneous effect by planting flowers in groups—or drifts, as gardeners call them.

The lily pond will look even more attractive, in its setting, viewed from the house. The steps are an invitation to view at close quarters, which in turn recommends stocking the pool with goldfish. The glory of the pool, however, should be its nymphaea, or lilies. Three good varieties are Marliacea albida (white), Marliacea chromatella (yellow) and froebeli (crimson). They can be planted in baskets filled with loam—to which a little bone meal may be added—and lowered to the floor of the pool, where the baskets should be anchored by stones. Propagation is by division, which should be done between April and June.

Canadian pond weed, milfoil, and—to give some height—water iris, should be grown in the pool. At the edge, mimulus (the spotted musk), primulas and the plantain lily may be grown. If planted near enough, the shrub cotoneaster horizontalis, too, will overhang the water most attractively.

When stocking sloping ground it is important to remember that natural drainage will tend to make the soil dry. Shrubs such as berberis and hypericum grow there, so do the plants sedum, polygonum and heuchera, and most of the annuals—certainly night-scented stock, linaria, linum, mesembryanthemum (particularly criniflorum) and calendula. Even so it is best to work a moisture-holding material, peat or leaf mould, into the bank.

The bright red dahlias and scarlet salvias in this garden are attractive; note, too, how the hydrangeas are planted in front of the house wall to protect them against high winds and frost. The drifts of flowers give an illusion of informality.

sh garden

our house a setting
r home—in town or country

AMONG the loveliest corners of many English gardens is the rose walk—not difficult to make, but so effective.

Larch or conifer poles nine feet high, sunk two feet into the ground and nailed with a crossbar, make the arches. Climbing roses to choose from are in three groups: (1) upright growers, mainly suited to walls and single pillars; (2) fairly stiff upright growers for large pillars, pergolas, arches and fences; (3) Wichuraiana, the true rambler, which will trail beautifully over arches and trellises. But representatives of each group may be used.

Among the most popular—and among the best—of the ramblers are Dorothy Perkins (brilliant rose pink), Excelsa (bright crimson flowers in large clusters) and Alberic Barbier (pure yellow buds opening to creamy white). Adelaide d'Orleans (pinky-white flowers with golden centres), and Minnehaha (rose pink) are two other fine varieties.

In the second group are American Pillar (deep rose flowers), Blushing Lucy (very late flowering), Goldfinch (soft yellow), Seven Sisters (mauvish pink) and New Dawn (exquisite shell pink). Three climbers to use are Allen Chandler (scarlet), Climbing Caroline Testout (one of the best scented roses), and the flesh-pink Climbing Ophelia.

The path beneath the rose arches can be bordered with small rockery stones and low-growing plants such as pinks, geum, nepeta and stachys lanata (lamb's ear). The background space between each arch can be filled with taller herbaceous plants.

COTTAGE gardens like this can look equally effective in the town or country. The yellow eschscholtzia (California poppy) is prominent in the foreground—so are Peruvian lilies, and the herbaceous perennial phlox. But the range of plants which go well in these gardens is limitless. Herbaceous perennials and hardy annuals thrive happily together so long as they have plenty of sunshine.

Useful perennials of varying sizes, to have in a mixed flower bed, include hollyhock, delphinium, paeony, verbascum, pyrethrum, heuchera, clarkia, pansy and gypsophila.

Here are a few choice varieties: phlox (Sir John Falstaff, large salmon-pink flowers), solidago (Lemore, a soft primrose yellow), papaver (Border Beauty, a large glowing red), chrysanthemum (Wirral Supreme, white), kniphofia, the red hot poker (Watkin Samuel, orange scarlet), gaillardia (Wirral Flame, blood-red flowers with yellow-tipped petals), and the new hyacinth-flowered varieties of foxglove, which flower all round the stem instead of on one side only.

Annuals to mix with the perennials include the lupin, lavatera, godetia, mignonette, love-in-a-mist.

Whether planted at the back or the front of a house, a mixed flower garden makes a wonderful display—one that deserves to be shared. In a front garden, especially, a simple wooden fence, rather than a hedge, permits the flowers to be viewed from the street—and allows sunshine and air to enter.

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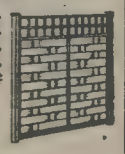

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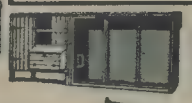

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GAY NEW FEATURES

BIRD BATH

THE best bath to provide for birds is a shallow pool—situated at least 9 ft. from cover where marauding cats may lurk—about 2 ft. in diameter. It is easily constructed, and costs less than 2s.

Mark the circle with pegs, or twigs, measuring it out with a one-foot string from a central stick. Cut out the turf with a spade and excavate a hole 6 in. deep in the middle, shallowing to 4 in. at the sides. Concrete the bottom 2 in. to 3 in. thick with about 1 cu. ft. of concrete made with one 2-gal. bucket of cement, two buckets of sand, and half a bucket of water. Line the sides with cobbles, veined rock or large shells. Cement them into position with their tops just above lawn level.

As a decoration, a flower pot can be placed in the centre, planted with rush, yellow creeping jenny or blue water forget-me-not.

HANGING BASKET

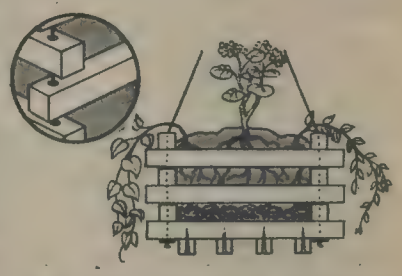
A HANGING basket is made with sixteen 9-in. lengths (12 ft. in all) of inch-square planed batten, at 2d. a foot.

First, drill ¼-in. holes 1 in. from both ends of each batten. Now lay two of the battens parallel, and lay four more parallel and evenly spaced across the first two, the outer battens of the four being 1¼ in. from the ends of the first two.

Wood screws (1½ in.) can now be driven through each of the holes drilled in the four upper battens, securing them firmly to the first two battens. This base is then turned over, so that the four battens form the base of the basket.

The remaining ten battens are nailed on in twos, each pair being parallel but each succeeding pair at right angles to the previous pair.

Use two 4-ft. lengths of medium-weight galvanized iron wire (1s. 2d. a



20-yd. coil) to secure the corners—and also to hang the basket. Push each end down through the holes at one corner. Secure it under the bottom batten by pushing through a washer, then bending or riveting it over.

Paint the battens and wire a bright colour for decoration and to preserve them.

Line the basket with moss before filling with fibrous loam. Water daily in dry weather.

Geraniums bloom well in a basket. The appearance is improved by including trailing plants, such as ivy, so that they are allowed to hang over the edge.

TRY THESE IDEAS

UNUSUAL VEGETABLES

GARDENERS in private service were once expected to provide a choice of fruit and vegetables for the table at all times of the year. This encouraged them to grow vegetables which have since been neglected.

First, here are some which are easy to grow for use in the winter and spring:

SEAKALE. The blanched leaf stem is delicious boiled and served with butter. Root cuttings (14s. a dozen) should be planted out in dug soil (15 in. between each plant) in April. Add 2 to 4 oz. of fertilizer to each square yard of soil. Remove all the shoots which form at the top of the cutting except one. Then, apart from weeding, the plants can be left until the winter when they can be stored for use either in a darkened greenhouse or a cellar, or left in the garden under an upturned flower-pot covered with bracken, straw or leaves.

To produce root cuttings, cut thick fleshy roots the size of a little finger from the main root or crown with horizontal cuts. Make a slanting cut at the other end of the severed root and push the cutting vertically into a box of sand, with this end foremost. Plant out in April.

SCORZONERA. This long, brownish root vegetable, like a very thin parsnip, is excellent served with white sauce. Sow the seeds in shallow drills in May, avoiding newly manured ground. Later, thin the seedlings to a minimum of 6 in. apart. The roots can be stored in sand or covered with straw.

SALSIFY. The plant produces a white tasty root, and the blanched leaves and stems can be served in the same way as asparagus. Cultivate as scorzonera.

CELERIAC. A turnip-rooted celery, propagated from seed under glass in March, and planted out in May or early June. It does not need to be grown in trenches, like ordinary celery. Useful for soups, stews and salads.

And here are some vegetables which can be used in the summer and autumn:

GLOBE ARTICHOKE. Plant in deep, fertile soil in March or April. The plants will produce young flower heads, which should be cut before the flowers open, cooked whole and served with butter, or eaten raw.

KOHL RABI. The seeds are sown in May on a fairly rich soil, and the seedlings are thinned to 9 in. apart. Use the roots when they are about the size of a cricket ball.

CAPSICUM (peppers). The seeds of this peculiar vegetable—which is shaped rather like a long tomato—are sown in February or March in a warm greenhouse (in pots about 5 in. in diameter) and the vegetable is planted out, in warmer districts, in late May or early June. Good varieties: Bullnosed Red, Long Yellow, Long Red.

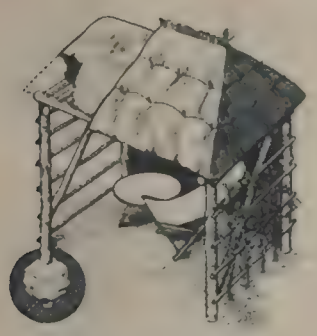
AUBERGINE (or egg plant). A long purple vegetable which is sliced and fried in butter. Sow in March in a warm greenhouse.

SALAD POTATO. Good variety: Fir Apple. Plant the tubers in April or early May in a 4-in. trench in a well-worked soil. Sprinkle a handful of fertilizer in each yard of the trench. Then earth up, as with other potatoes. The pink-skinned tubers with lemon-coloured flesh are ideal for salads.

Also for salad decoration try the red plum, red cherry or yellow currant tomato.

SWEET CORN should be sown under glass in March or April, planted out in May in good garden soil and picked in August or September when

FOR YOUR GARDEN



RUSTIC SUMMERHOUSE

BUILD a simple rough-thatched summerhouse in a sun-catching position that overlooks the garden. Total cost of the rustic round wood required should not exceed 50s.

Trim off the bark and creosote the wood to preserve it. Clear a site 7 ft. wide and 5 ft. from back to front. Then firmly bed four corner posts—4 in. to 5 in. in diameter and 9 ft. long—2 ft. into the ground.

Connect the front posts with a 7-ft. crosspiece, which should be trimmed flat where the sawn ends of the uprights butt on to it. Bridge the back posts in the same way. Holes, bored before nailing with 6-in. nails, will avoid splitting the wood.

Nail 5-ft. rafters 2 in. thick, across these two beams, about 9 in. apart. Fix other 2-in. poles similarly at the sides and, if necessary, at the back of the structure.

An 18-in. strut nailed across each upper corner will help to hold the framework steady.

Make the water-shooting shape of the roof by heaping dried hedge clippings and rough grass on the rafters. Top up if necessary with straw.

Thatch the roof with flat bundles of straightened wheat straw, bracken or heather, starting at the eaves and working upwards. Fix the thatch with string attached to pegs pushed through into the "hay" beneath.

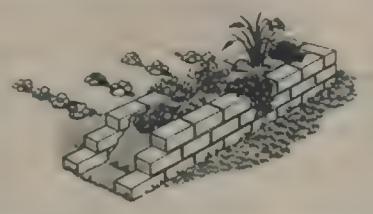
Finish the thatch off neatly by clipping it straight round the eaves and along the ridge.

FLOWER-TOPPED DWARF WALL

DWARF walls with flowers growing on top are a picturesque way of dividing the garden. One hundred bricks, costing 25s., make 4 yd. of wall, three bricks high.

Space for planting flowers is provided by a soil-filled cavity, 9 in. wide, between the two halves of the wall. Each half is one brick thick.

Make the footings for a permanent wall by digging two channels 6 in. wide, 4 in. deep and 6 in. apart. Fill them with concrete made with 1½ 2-gal. buckets of cement, 4½ buckets of sand, 6½ of shingle and one of water. This



makes 4 cu. ft. of concrete, enough for 4 yd. of double footings.

When the concrete hardens, peg two strings 18 in. apart to mark the outer sides of the wall. Lay the bricks with cement mortar.

For a semi-permanent "dry" wall bed the bottom bricks firmly on packed earth. Use sifted earth as mortar. For steadiness, lean the bricks slightly inwards by wedging the outer edges with small pebbles or slate.

TO BRING VARIETY

the seeds begin to yellow. It must have a very sunny position.

CALABRESE (Italian green-sprouting broccoli) is sown in shallow drills in April, thinned to 2 ft. apart, and used in August and September. The green shoots have an excellent flavour.

NEW ZEALAND SPINACH. Sow in April or May in shallow drills. Thin the seedlings to 12 in. apart. The tender green shoots are delicious, and the vegetable will go on producing them into the autumn.

For use all the year except in the spring try:

SEAKALE BEET, sometimes known as silver beet, or Swiss chard. The stalks and midribs of the leaves are served up as seakale, and the rest of the leaves as spinach. Sow April—July in the same way as beetroot.

ENDIVE can be used at any time. Sow at intervals from the spring to the autumn, in drills, like lettuce. Thin the seedlings to 9 in. apart, and allow them to grow until they form a large rosette of leaves. Upturned pots placed over each plant will encourage those curly leaves which grace salads.

INDOOR PLANTS

INDOOR foliage plants which last for years are more popular than ever. Their cultivation is simple.

All the plants thrive on John Innes potting compost, which can now be bought in small amounts ready-mixed. Large plants should be planted in pots as small as possible. The other way round, the soil will become sour.

After about twelve months, preferably between March and the end of June, the plants can be transferred into pots a size larger. Five or six weeks after repotting, a liquid fertilizer may be added, according to the maker's instructions. In winter, the plants need not be fed, but the pots should be moved from window sills at night to avoid frost damage.

Never water indoor plants in dribbles—leave them until the soil is obviously dry, or the pot has a clear ring when you tap it; then give the plants a thorough soaking.

The philodendron is one of my favourite plants. It has glossy-green heart-shaped leaves and looks attractive trained up wood or bark—especially the cork bark imported from Portugal. The aerial roots of the plant attach themselves to the bark and get some nourishment from it. The plants will grow in a north-facing window and like a lot of water when growing. Propagation is by cuttings.

Another personal favourite is chlorophytum. It has rather insignificant creamy white flowers, but boasts long cream and green straplike leaves which arch out over the side of the pot. It must not be over-watered in the winter.

A plant to grow in a warm room is maranta—dull green leaves with beautiful maroon markings down each side of the main rib.

Perhaps the most attractive free-growing trailing plant is the tradescantia, or creeping sailor. It grows best in a light place—though not in direct sunlight—which brings out the transparent quality of the leaves, and it must be well watered, especially in summer. It is easy to propagate by planting 2-in. cuttings of the trailing growths.

One of the hardiest and most peculiar of all indoor plants is the sansevieria — known as mother-in-law's tongue because of its sharp pointed leaves. This is a plant for a light room, and in the winter must be treated almost as a cactus—the soil must be kept extremely dry.

Hedera, or ivy, is equally hardy, and will tolerate draughts, gas fumes and neglect without much complaint.

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GARDENING IN THE NORTH

by GEOFFREY D. SMITH

As head gardener of the Northern Horticultural Society gardens in Harrogate for nearly three years, I have learned that two of the chief problems encountered by northern gardeners are severe or late frost and strong winds.

Although, last year, our dahlias and half-hardy annuals were not planted until June 7, and although the latter were protected to some extent by a lonicera hedge, a frost on June 16 checked and ultimately killed both the phlox drummondi and the petunia. Others flowered very late.

Four times out of five, however, it is reasonably safe to plant half-hardy annuals and dahlias and to bed out plants of the pelargonium type in early June. In most cases London and the south have a three weeks lead in this respect.

Delphiniums and other herbaceous plants, which start into growth early, can be protected from the frost by covering the crowns with sand or ash. Shrubs or small trees such as eucalyptus can often be saved from severe damage in a hard frost by wrapping the first two or three feet of the stems in straw. Shrubs in general, other than the evergreen, should be planted in early spring rather than the autumn.

Hardy annuals should never be sown outside before mid-April. It's a good idea to put cloches over the site for sweet peas some ten days before planting, to pre-warm the soil.

The main difficulty with vegetables is getting the soil warm early and in a friable condition for sowing. A sowing of beetroot I made on March 21 last year, without cloches, did not germinate.

Even in a good summer, tomatoes will not ripen at Harrogate without cloche protection. I have grown a peach tree on a south wall, in the North Riding, but it failed to set fruit. A fig tree ripened a crop one year in three, and two years in succession I had a good crop of apricots—a variety called Moorpark; fan-trained.

Apples do well most years. I grow them on single cordons, my favourite varieties being Cox's and American Mother. One point to remember is to plant compatible varieties for cross-pollination. This applies equally to pears, plums and cherries.

Wind can be partly countered by the careful siting of hedges. Common beech is excellent for a medium to large garden, while lonicera should be grown if quick results are desired.

Staking of plants should be carried out early—I suggest half-inch square stakes made of oak. But in spite of all precautions, high winds massacred our herbaceous borders when they were in full bloom last year.

Extensive trials have been carried out with hybrid tea roses, and only The Doctor has had to be discarded. Ericas, alpines, gentians and primulas thrive in the north. So do flowering cherries—which are a "must" in most gardens.

I do not recommend any of the following plants to be attempted in the north, except in the most sheltered of locations: pieris forrestii, drimys winteri, carpenteria californica, lomatia longifolia and tinctoria, osmanthus Fortunei, pittosporum bicolor, tricuspidaria lanceolata, most of the myrtus, and, to my greatest regret, desfontainea spinosa.

These are only some of the plants tried at our gardens which have failed. They will, of course, be tried again in other locations.

CHARTS TO GUIDE YOU

FLOWERS ROUND THE YEAR

SEASON	FLOWERS	TYPE	TIME TO BUY OR PLANT
JANUARY	Snowdrops and eranthis	Bulbs	September
	Pansies	Perennials	Sow in June or July
FEBRUARY	Miniature narcissi, scillas, crocus, etc.	Bulbs	August or September
	Cornus Mas, hamamelis, laurestinus, berberis japonica, Daphne Mezereum	Shrubs	October to March
MARCH	Daffodils, etc.	Bulbs	August or September
	Doronicums, polyanthus	Herbaceous	Autumn or spring
	Chaenomeles, forsythia	Shrubs	Autumn or winter
APRIL	Tulips, etc.	Bulbs	November
	Wallflowers, Brompton stocks	Biennials	Sow in May or June
	Doronicums, golden alyssum, aubrietia, iberis	Herbaceous and rockery	Autumn
	Flowering currant, forsythia	Shrubs	October to March
MAY	Pot marigolds, etc.	Hardy annuals	Sow in August
	Wallflowers, honesty, sweet rocket	Biennials	Sow May to June
	Broom, lilacs, berberis	Shrubs	Autumn and winter
	Tulips	Bulbs	November
JUNE	Roses	Shrubs	November to March
	Anchusa, Iceland poppies, iris, pinks, lupins, catmint, oriental poppies, etc.	Herbaceous	Autumn or spring
	Azaleas and rhododendrons, ceanothus, mock orange, weigela, genista	Shrubs	October or April
JULY	Sweet peas	Annuals	Sow November or January (March out of doors)
	Scarlet flax, clarkia, love-in-a-mist, etc.	Hardy annuals	Sow March-April
	Ox-eye daisies, scabious, delphiniums, lupins, gypsophila, achillea, campanulas	Herbaceous	Autumn or spring
	Veronica, lavender, mock orange	Shrubs	Autumn or spring
AUGUST	China asters, etc.	Half-hardy annuals	Sow under glass in February (Out of doors in April)
	Shirley poppies, etc.	Hardy annuals	Sow in March-April
	Gladiolus	Bulbs (corms)	Early spring
	Echinops, phlox, rudbeckia	Herbaceous	Autumn or spring
SEPTEMBER	Dahlias	Tuberous perennial	May-June
OCTOBER	Chrysanthemums, helianthus, etc.	Herbaceous	April; October to March
NOVEMBER	Michaelmas daisies, red hot pokers	Herbaceous	April
DECEMBER	Winter jasmine, laurestinus	Shrubs	October
	Christmas roses	Herbaceous	March

CROPS THAT ARE WORTH MONEY

VEGETABLES CROP	QUANTITY BOUGHT	COST	HARVEST	VALUE OF PRODUCT
ARTICHOKE (Jerusalem)	14 lb.	8s.	100 lb.	£1 5s. to £1 10s.
BROAD BEANS	1–1½ pint	4s.	200 lb.	£2 10s.
FRENCH BEANS	1 pint	3s. 9d.	120 lb.	£3
RUNNER BEANS	1 pint	4s. 6d.	360 lb.	£4 10s.
BEET	1–2 oz.	3s.	100 lb.	£1 5s.
BROCCOLI	½ oz.	3s.	50 heads	£1 5s.
BRUSSELS SPROUTS	4 oz.	1s. 6d.	80 lb.	£2
CARROTS	½ oz.	1s. 8d.	80 lb.	£1
CAULIFLOWER	small packet	2s. 6d.	50 heads	£1 5s.
CORN, SWEET	1 oz.	2s. 6d.	30 cobs	£1
LEEKS	½ oz.	2s. 6d.	75 leeks	15s.
ONIONS	½ oz.	2s. 6d.	80 lb.	£1
PARSNIPS	½ oz.	1s. 3d.	100 lb.	£1 5s.
PEAS	2 pints	7s.	100 lb.	£2 10s.
POTATOES	14 lb.	6s. 6d.	100 lb.	£1
SHALLOTS	14 lb.	£1 1s.	56 lb.	£2 10s.
TOMATOES	1 doz. plants	6s.	50 lb.	£2 10s.

FRUITS	COST	NO. OF YEARS IN BEARING	AVERAGE CROP OVER THIS PERIOD
CURRANTS AND GOOSEBERRIES	4s. 6d. per bush	5 or more	2–4 lb. per bush after the second season
STRAWBERRIES	£1 5s. per 50 plants	3 seasons	20 lb. from the 50 plants each season
RASPBERRIES	£1 10s. per 50 plants	5 or more seasons	15 lb. from the 50 plants after the first season

The chart printed above provides a rough guide to the basic cost—and probable return—of growing particular varieties of vegetables and fruits.

The costs given are basic ones, to which must be added the cost of fertilizers and insecticides (reckon 10s. worth of fertilizers per 100 ft. row as an average figure for a season).

The value of produce is also variable, but the chart indicates which produce is most valuable.

MAKE THE MOST OF A GREENHOUSE

QUARTER	PLANTS (in flower, or cropping)	WHEN TO START	SPECIAL ITEMS OF CARE AND ROUTINE
JANUARY TO MARCH	All kinds of spring bulbs	Autumn	Pot, cover with ashes or sand for 8 weeks in frame, or near a wall, before transferring into greenhouse as required
	Cinerarias	May	Sow the seeds, prick out and pot on as needed, keeping steady growth. Spray with insecticide regularly, and shade during the summer
	Zygocactus	Any time	Never permit them a fully dried out soil at any time. A good house plant
	Cyclamen	Early summer	Sow seeds, grow on steadily through the first winter
APRIL TO JUNE	Schizanthus and various annuals	August	Raise from seed
	Geraniums (zonal pelargoniums)	Spring or late summer	Raise frequently from cuttings, to keep the plants in flower practically all the year round
	Hydrangeas	Summer	Take cuttings of non-flowering shoots in April. Water freely
	Tritonia	Autumn	Five to six corms in each 5 in. pot
JULY TO SEPTEMBER	Begonias, gloxinias	March-April	Start into growth on damp, warm soil, before potting tubers. Shade during the summer
	Fuchsias	Spring	Grow from cuttings, autumn and spring
	Coleus	March	Raise from seed or cuttings
	Tomatoes	April	The plants need full sunshine
OCTOBER TO DECEMBER	Chrysanthemums	Winter–spring	Raise fresh every season from cuttings
	Primula obconica	February–March	Raise from seed. Do not water overhead in bright sunshine
	Geraniums, fuchsias, coleus	Spring	See previous information

Make sure that the greenhouse temperature is above 40 degrees F.

Let Percy Thrower help you in your garden

In next week's JOHN BULL, Percy Thrower will describe how to make a rock garden and what to plant in it. A week later, he will tell you how to grow show vegetables. Then, in a new series of Your Garden and Mine which will appear in subsequent issues, he will share the secrets of his own gardening success by commenting on hints sent in by readers.

Begin sending in your own practical, topical and original gardening hints now. Address them to Percy Thrower, Your Garden and Mine, JOHN BULL, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Entries cannot be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed.

"JOHN BULL" WILL PAY FIVE GUINEAS FOR EACH PUBLISHED HINT

dle of the doorway of the old hut . . . watching, frowning. "What are you doing here, boy?" he asked. His voice was low, quiet—and angry

when suddenly I heard Uncle Cy's voice, low, quiet, angry. "What are you doing here, boy?"

I jumped back from the stove and almost fell over the poles. He was standing in the middle of the doorway, watching me, frowning, a cigarette hanging loosely from his down-turned lips. He was as still as a tree.

I stumbled quickly out of the hut. "What's this place?" I asked.

But he wouldn't be misled. "What did I tell you about snakes?" he said. "Do you want to get bitten?".

I said: "I didn't see any snakes."

He turned away abruptly. He said: "Come on. Help me with the cows."

He didn't speak to me all the way back.

Next morning, for the first time, I was allowed to cycle in to Queenie's store at Ngarla for the mail, and I told her about the hut.

"That's one of your uncle's fads," she said wearily. "I've been trying to talk him into getting rid of it for years, but he won't."

"But why does he want it left standing?"

Queenie smiled and looked aside absently, as if remembering something with affection. "Your Aunt Lenore died in that hut, son," she said. "Your Uncle Cy married her when he was only twenty. They didn't have any money; the hut was all they had. Your uncle built up the farm from that. He'd already had the new house built, and they were ready to move in, when your poor aunt died; trapdoor spider, it was.

"The hut's been standing there ever since. He hasn't had the heart to tear it down. He could start a banana plantation on that hill, if he got rid of the hut and all that lantana round it. He could widen the whole farm. But he won't. It's a sort of memorial to your aunt.

"It's a nice thought, but"—she sighed—"he's living in the past. I knew your Aunt Lenore well—we used to go to school together. I know she wouldn't have wanted him to be that way—lonely and all, nobody to help him."

She paused, then clucked her tongue impatiently. "But I can't change his mind. Lord knows I've tried. Don't you worry though—he'll see reason one day."

She didn't sound cheerful as she said it. It seemed to me that she was just being brave. . . .

I never went to the hut again and Uncle Cy

Continued on page 43

Cox inspects the work of one of his men. When renovators hose buildings, they have to take care not to shower passers-by; but once, water filtering through a pavement cut off telephones

Peter Cox puts life into stone

by ROBERT HOLLES

His make-up men give bright new faces to old buildings

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

A LARGE fragment of Portland stone fell from a cornice on the Royal Staff College, Camberley, a few years ago, and narrowly missed the commandant. Some time later, Peter Cox, the founder of a firm of stone restorers, walked round the building, estimating its condition with the aid of a pair of binoculars.

"The first thing I noticed was the wisteria which covered a large part of the walls and grew to a considerable height," says Cox. "The obvious thing to do was to find out what was happening underneath."

When Cox's restorers arrived to carry out repairs to the building, they tore away the creeper and discovered that large areas of the concealed stonework had decayed back to a depth of about an inch. "All this had to be restored," says Cox. "We had to replace all the balustrades and repair a number of cornices in addition to removing the marks left by the creeper. After six months it looked like a new building, good for another hundred years."

Since he founded the firm just over six years ago, Cox, a well-groomed, quietly persuasive man in his late thirties, has restored and cleaned buildings in all parts of England, including St. Mary's Hospital, Brighton Pavilion, Northampton County Hall, the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, Selfridge's and Fortnum and Mason's. During this period his firm's annual turnover has risen from £8,000 to £40,000. Costs of restoration range from £10,000 for a large motor factory to the £6 10s. recently charged for repairing a step in Harley Street.

Most of the trade comes from big companies or public undertakings. There are few stately homes on the firm's books. Cox puts this down to lack of finance among the few surviving owners of large country residences.

Quite frequently Cox is asked to work to a strict time limit. At Heal's showrooms in Tottenham Court Road, London, the job had to be completed in time for the annual general meeting, and in order to avoid inconvenience to the store's customers the restorers had to work at night. "We did the job with a day to spare."

During the shooting of the film, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, Cox was engaged by the film company to renovate the ballroom of a house in Grosvenor Gardens as a setting for a foreign embassy. He also had to clean and restore a flight of stone steps and a pair of columns in the entrance hall of a house in Park Lane where one of the most dramatic sequences of the film was to be staged.

"It was the only time," says Cox, "that our restorers went to work in taxis."

The film's technical director was not quite satisfied with the result, and asked Cox to cover the pillars with marble paper in order to give an added effect of opulence. "To my surprise, the pillars looked exactly like marble."

A more difficult task was set by a resident of Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, who asked for his coat-of-arms to be transferred from one side of his doorway to the other. The arms were so eroded that the restorer had to re-create them entirely, drawing upon his imagination, experience and a rough sketch provided by the owner.

The problem of decaying stone has increased in scope and importance with the corresponding increase of industrial pollution during the last century. It has been estimated that acid gases and soot in the atmosphere—"smog"—cost the country between £55 million and £60 million over a period of twenty-five years. Soot clings to the surfaces of buildings and becomes encrusted into the stone, causing chemical disintegration.

This occurs principally in industrial areas, but country districts are not immune from the effects of industrial gases pouring from remote factory chimneys.

The only remedy is periodical cleaning. "No preservative has yet proved to be effective for

Continued on page 50

IT'S TIME FOR CRUNCH

Fry's NEW milk chocolate sensation!

Milk chocolate with golden honeycomb crisp

Mum, you're wonderful!

A juicy steak, tender and slightly underdone—just as Dad likes it—fried potatoes, fine-cut and crisp; garden fresh peas; tomatoes and mushrooms cooked in butter . . . and then, the crowning touch, the added savour of piping-hot BISTO gravy. What a dish to set before a hungry breadwinner! "Mum—you're wonderful", he says—*and you deserve it!*

ah! BISTO

the crowning touch

THE WHITE WIND

by H. E. BATES

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI

Ginette and the boy were prisoners now—trapped by an engine that wouldn't start . . . and by a drunkard with murder in his eyes

FROM the darkness of the waterfront young Timi watched the schooner, longing to be aboard her when she sailed. When her engine started, his blood was on fire with the sound. . . .

Typhoid threatened the island. The only way to get help, declared Longuemart, the young French doctor, was to sail to Papeete—and the only boat available was the derelict schooner belonging to the drunken American, Edison.

Edison was shamed into making the trip by Ginette, the beautiful native girl he had jilted. In turn, gross, cowardly Fat Uncle was bullied into going with them.

Fat Uncle had once owned the schooner, and had told Timi great lies about his voyages in her. "Like the wind, she goes, boy," Fat Uncle boasted. "Like the wind." And now she was putting to sea again.

Timi, choosing his moment, crept on board and hid in the hold. When the schooner sailed, he would sail with her. Like the wind. . . .

Edison grabbed the boy by his shirt, and started to yell at him. Then, with an open hand, he cuffed him on both sides of the face

PART TWO

Into The Black Storm

TIMI dozed off and came to himself some hours later, in the first light of morning, in a world of shaking timbers. The reality of the engine actually running in its confined cradle at the foot of the small companionway no longer struck him as beautiful. He felt his blood begin to blench at the smell of engine oil. His veins felt white and cold. His impression was that they were filled with whiteness.

After he had been sick two or three times, retching as quietly as he could into a sack, he sat up. The boat progressed in a series of deep, fat rolls that were so regular that after a time he let his body go with them without any attempt at resistance. Presently, in this way, he beat the last of his sickness.

He was not afraid. He remembered over and over again some words of Fat Uncle's: "The sea is your friend. There is no need to be afraid of the sea." At the same time he experienced occasional short moods of disappointment. The boat seemed to progress neither like the wind nor like a bird, as Fat Uncle had told him it would. It seemed much more like a thick, slow slug crawling its way through waters he could not see.

He longed to go on deck. He began to feel, and then to be sure, that the world on deck would be the world he had imagined: his promised world, the world in which the boat flew on a strong white wind; the world of great fish with mouths like doors; the world of Fat Uncle and the far, long voyages.

The heat of the day was already rising when he dared at last to crawl on deck. Sun struck him brassily as he lifted his face above the companionway. At this moment he feared Fat Uncle. He was sure that Fat Uncle would strike him.

Instinctively he searched the deck for Fat Uncle, and at first saw only Edison, standing at the wheel, looking ahead, his back towards him. Then he saw Fat Uncle lying flat on his belly, face turned sideways across the deck. It astonished the boy very much to see that his lips were grey.

With wide eyes, Fat Uncle lay and stared at him. His mouth fell open. He raised himself on one elbow and with the other hand pawed at his face, gropily, as if pulling at invisible cobwebs.

Then, like an enormous frog, he inflated his chest and face and let out a gigantic croak that brought Edison whipping round from the wheel. The croak became a thinning whimper. The eyes squeezed themselves shut. They remained shut for the space of a quarter of a minute or so. Then suddenly they shot open again, and Fat Uncle, with a yell, told himself of the reality of the boy.

"It is you! It is you! You came up there like a ghost."

"For God's sake!" Edison said.

The boy stood at the head of the small companionway, waiting to be struck. It surprised him greatly that no one moved to strike him. It surprised him still more to see that Fat Uncle, the man of the sea, lifting himself to his knees, face grey and sickened, looked as frightened as he felt himself.

"How the hell did you get here?" Edison said.

He started trembling and had nothing to answer. His veins ran white again. The sea ran white about the schooner. He felt sick again as he stared at its running whiteness and the faces of the men.

In a third great moment of surprise he saw the girl walking up from the stern of the schooner. He had never remotely expected to see her there. He had expected the world of men to be completed, for some reason, by the young French doctor.

Fat Uncle, as the girl appeared, experienced one of his sudden waves of courage and waved an elephantine fist at the boy. He lurched unsteadily as he threw the blow with vague menaces, like a drunk, but the blow missed by a yard.

"That's right. Strike him," the girl said. "Be brave. Strike him."

"I ought to throw the little squirt overboard," Edison said. "Sharkwards."

"That's it. You be brave, too," she said.

It was Edison now who started yelling. He yelled for Fat Uncle to take the wheel. Then he grabbed the boy by the shirt and yelled into his face: "How the hell did you creep in?" With an open hand he cuffed him first on one side of his face, then the other. He bawled incomprehensibly, his narrow face raging. Then he turned on Fat Uncle. "You were supposed to keep him working, you fat baboon, out back there. What in hell were you up to?"

After this, since there was no answer from Fat Uncle, he cuffed the boy about the face again, knocking him from side to side.

"You are very brave, too," the girl said.

"Shut up and lie down somewhere," Edison yelled.

"You didn't used to talk to me like that," she said.

"I talk how I like."

"Everybody knows."

"And another thing—I'm in charge here," Edison yelled. "I'm skipper. This is my boat."

"Come with me. Come this way," the girl said and held out her hand to the boy.

The boy followed her to the stern end of the deck. She was preparing food there: bread, with a little rice and scrapings of raw fish and a few red peppers. A half stalk of bananas lay

Timi scrambled across the flooded hold, stumbling in water. "Stay here," said Ginette, taking pity on the boy. "Don't come up. Keep away"

on the deck, together with Edison's crate of whisky.

"Why did you come?" she said.

He did not know why he had come. He stared at the sea's running whiteness. A snowy wake between himself and a jagged glitter of horizon held him transfixed. He discovered that he could no longer tell why he had come, why he wanted to come or of the great thoughts that had once pounded through him. Most of all the great thoughts had vanished, meaningless or incomprehensible, and would not come back.

"There's no need to be afraid of anything," she said. "Don't be afraid."

"Why did you come?" he said.

She did not answer. She turned her head away, face half-hidden by the huge black mass of her hair. She sat cross-legged as she busied herself with the fish, her big legs and feet bare, her knees golden and shining, her *pareu* drawn up above them. Her hair, when it fell the full length and she was sitting down, as she was now, was thick and long enough to spread about her like a cloak.

"Why did you come?" he said. "I didn't think you were coming."

"I came like you did," she said. "Hiding."

He sat cross-legged, too, staring at her. He remembered how she had leaned against the stern of the schooner in complete darkness, brooding. Was it possible that she brooded about coming?

He watched the whiteness of the sea, the hot, glittering light, running past her dark head. Her splendid, gentle, brooding face was carved against the sky-line that ran in the heat of morning like pure flame.

He started wondering, for some reason, how old she was. She looked, he thought, much older than yesterday: much older than the day he had heard her laughing so loudly in the presence of the two doctors. He could not remember seeing her laugh ever since that time.

He guessed that she would be old. Everybody who was grown-up was old. That was natural. It was only people like himself who were not old, and he said now, solemnly: "How old are you. I never knew how old you were."

She actually laughed a little, showing her broad white teeth. "As old as my tongue and a little older than my teeth," she said.

"So am I."

"Sixteen," she said. "That's how old I am."

"Is that old?" he said.

"I sometimes think," she said, "it's as old as I ever want to be."

They went on talking together, sometimes busy with the food, sometimes doing nothing, for most of the morning. The swell across the ocean seemed to lengthen with the heat of

the day. The candescent wake of the slugging schooner grew no faster but simply whitened more fiercely, blinding in the perpendicular sun.

Towards twelve o'clock Edison came aft for a few minutes, picked a whisky bottle out of the crate and stood with it in his hand, drinking, staring out to sea. The girl did not speak to him.

Edison spoke only once, and then not to the girl. Walking away, pausing half a dozen paces up the deck, he waved the bottle out to an ocean apparently empty except for a distant, long-winged sea-bird flying low above the water.

"Look, boy. See that?"

The boy looked up in time to see, fifty yards away, the explosion of a single rising shark. It sprang from the water like a suddenly discharged torpedo and then vanished instantly, seeming to leave on the hot air an echo that in reality was Edison's voice, laughing.

"See you behave, boy," Edison said, "or that's where you go."

He swung away towards the wheel, lifting the bottle to his mouth, indulging his favourite habit of drinking as he walked. From the wheel the boy heard him laugh again, as if perhaps he were repeating the joke to Fat Uncle, who in turn laughed, too.

After that the boy sat for some long time quite silent. It was beyond him to know if the threat of Edison was real or if the laughter of Edison was only laughter. He was aware, in a strange way, of a growing expansion of the sea about him. The shark that had sprung suddenly out of the heart of it was an evil vision that was also a threatening voice. The recollection of its moment of furious savagery made him shudder.

There was no way he knew of expressing himself about these things and he simply sat staring at the gentle, brooding face of the girl.

"When will we arrive?" he said. "Today?"

"Perhaps tonight. If all goes well."

He wanted very much to arrive. The air was growing thicker and more oppressive every moment and he was glad to see the girl pouring out, into an enamel cup, a drink of water.

Drinking the water, he sat staring, in his long-sighted, solemn fashion, far out to sea. It had occurred to him suddenly that he might see land there. By searching for land he might project himself into a still farther world, beyond Edison's sinister jocularities and the voice of the shark, where no one could threaten him any more.

For the space of a few seconds he actually believed he could see land, in a purplish, uncertain mass, looming from the horizon. He watched this mass for some moments longer without certainty. Then it began to seem to him nebulously, ominously unlike land.

He spoke to the girl, pointing: "Is that where we're going?" he said. "Is that the land?"

The girl rose on her knees in order to look more easily over the side of the schooner. In this alert, upright posture she let out a sudden gasp of alarm. A moment later she had twisted herself completely to her feet and was running along the deck.

"Look there! Look there!" she was shouting. "That way!"

The boy stood motionless, watching the horizon with its ominous flower of darkening cloud, and knew suddenly that it was not the land. . . .

He lay below in the hold, side by side with the girl, in complete darkness, when the storm hit them from the south.

All morning he had been aware of a wind of splendid whiteness on the sea. Now he knew that what hit them was a black wind. It was a wind of solid, driving water. He felt it pounding against the wooden bows of the schooner in an unbroken attack that sent him rolling like a light and helpless barrel across the timbers and then pushed him back again.

He yelled in pain as his head cracked on the bulwark and for the first time in his life he could hear no responsive sound of his own voice against the roar of wind and rain. Somewhere in the middle of this maelstrom of driving sound an object crashed with sickening thunder down the steps of the companionway. The boy did not know until afterwards that this was Fat Uncle. With a tremendous clang that seemed for a moment like the side of the ship exploding inwardly, the hatch-cover closed behind him, battening the three of them down.

It was impossible for him to know how long the black wind beat at them. The squat flatness of the boat kept her riding down long troughs that, just as she seemed to be free, curled like vast conical hooks and clawed her back again. At each end of these raging troughs she was so low in the water, leaking at the seams, that he lay half-drowned.

When the wind began to lessen, with a sinister abruptness that startled him far more than his first sight of the storm-cloud had done, he became gradually aware of an ominous situation. He could not hear the engine beating. All he could hear above the dying wind were the elephantine hands of Fat Uncle clawing their way, ape-like, up the totally dark steps of the hatchway.

An astonishing shaft of metallic sunlight seemed to dart down through the opening hatch and scooped Fat Uncle up to the deck. The boy heard Edison yelling. In a sudden list of the schooner, water from the deck poured down the steps.

Edison yelled again. In stumbling response Fat Uncle reappeared at the top of the hatchway and a moment later slithered down it. He began to make frantic and misdirected attacks on the engine, banging pointlessly with spanners. Water slushed about the hold, drenching the boy as it climbed up the bulwarks and bounced back again.

He stared at the fumbling figure of Fat Uncle with a mixture of brooding hope and pity. The huge hands, convulsively picking up tools and groping about the engine cradle, were pathetic in their obstinate impression of doing something useful. Now and then they hovered, jelly-like, above the puzzle of plugs and mechanism, fingering objects with timidity, as if they were monsters that would sting.

Suddenly an enraged, half-drunk Edison threw himself down the hatchway. He yelled incomprehensible threats at Fat Uncle and struck him flat-handed about the face. The great yellow ape dived sideways as the boy so often dived in retreat from him and then fell, deflated, into the sloppy water of the hold.

"Get up on deck," Edison yelled. "Get hold of the wheel and try to keep her steady when she goes."

Watching the drenched and yellow figure heaving itself up the hatchway, the boy suddenly felt infinitely sorry for Fat Uncle. A moment later he saw Edison pounding the gross flopping back with his knee.

"Get up there. Go on, damn you! Out of the way—I want to get on deck. Move yourself—God, you got us into this thing, didn't you, but you've got about as much bloody idea how to get us out as a sea-egg."

The two men disappeared on deck. A rush of wind blew away the last of Edison's disturbed threats. A minute later it seemed to blow the man himself back again. He had armed himself with two bottles. He was actually performing, as he came down the hatchway, his trick of drinking as he walked.

He too made attacks on the engine. A thin enraged strength gave the white, unmuscular arms a wiry, clockwork activity. It was unbrutal but sinister. At intervals he slapped his mouth against the bottle. With the return of sunlight the air had become cinderous again and presently Edison ripped off his shirt. The prominent white ribs, curiously hairless, were bathed in sweat, and the boy suddenly saw him as a living, clawing, mechanical skeleton. . . .

An hour later the engine was still not working and periodically Edison stormed at it with disjointed shouts. In a lurch of the boat an oil drum freed itself from somewhere and rolled against his shins, setting him yelling in a venomous tirade against Fat Uncle, the French doctor, and above all at the monstrous stupidity of ever having come on this trip. The boat was a death-trap.

Time measured itself in the emptying of a bottle. He uncorked another. As the level of this second one lowered itself, the skeleton-like figure of Edison seemed to disappear. A trapped, blasphemous prisoner took its place: a prisoner of an engine that would not work and of a vision so disturbed that he actually started to aim misplaced blows at the bulwarks as if hammering to be free.

In a final abusing storm of threats he lurched wildly up the companionway, swinging the spanner. The boy heard him scream hoarsely on a harsh upward scale of abuse, incoherent to him except in a final repeated phrase: "I'm coming for you, you fat swine. I'm coming for you."

At the moment of Edison's disappearance the boy saw the girl emerge from the darkness behind the engine cradle. Her *peren*, like her arms and legs, was drenched in oil and water.

She picked up a hammer left by Edison on the engine cover. She stood for a moment at the foot of the steps. The boy scrambled across the flooded hold, stumbling in water. She seemed to take pity on the anxious brooding eyes.

"Stay here," she said. "Don't come up. Keep away."

She started up the steps. A gust of wind shuddering down the companionway blew away the complete coherence of whatever she said next but he thought it sounded like: "He gets filled with madness. The whisky blinds him. He doesn't see. . . ."

In three or four leaps she was up the steps. Sheer curiosity could not keep him back and less than half a minute later he was crawling after her.

He emerged on to what seemed to him a steaming, deserted deck. Heat was burning up the last of the flood of spray and rain. The deck planks were giving off grey, rising vapour.

He found himself suspended in fear and excitement at the head of the companionway. His hands and knees felt locked. When he did move at last, it was to retreat a step or two as Edison tore blindly past him, yelling, with Fat Uncle a yard or two ahead.

He heard Fat Uncle fall, screaming, against the wheel. He knelt cold and transfixed as Edison beat at the yellow mass of flesh with the spanner.

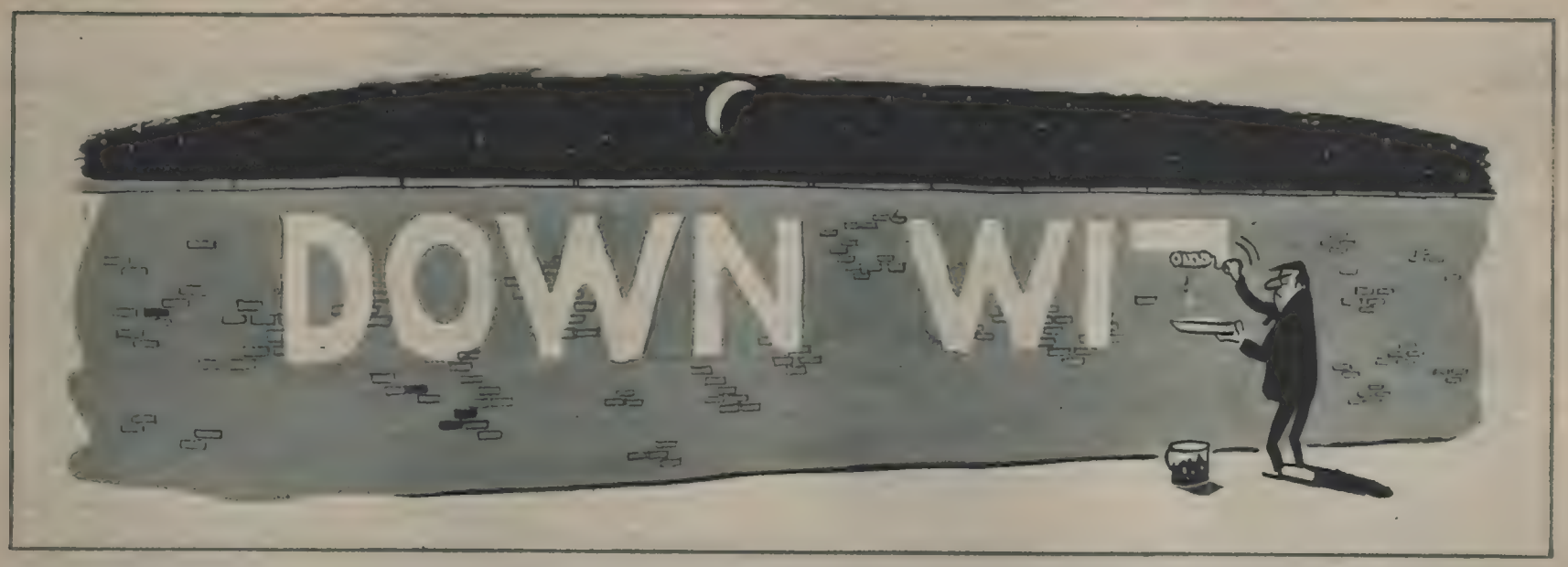
The girl came running too. She aimed a single blow at Edison's shoulder with the hammer. A second before the impact Edison turned his head sharply as if to shout at her and the blow crushed into the smooth white top of the balding skull.

Edison fell sightlessly. A moment of awful surprise seemed to click his mouth open. A gust of sea-wind seemed to blow a thin feather of blood from his lips. A second gust of wind caught the entire body as it fell, pitching it suddenly, frail and more than ever skeleton-like, against the wheel, where Fat Uncle lay. . . .

The boy stood for what seemed to him a long time surveying the dead. It would not have surprised him very much if the girl had been dead too. She sat stiffly against the side of the deck, head bowed, face completely hidden in the mass of her hair.

He was disturbed at last by a vague notion that the dead ought to be covered. He walked back towards the stern of the schooner and presently found a tarpaulin in a locker. He dragged it back along the deck, spread it out and threw it at last over the bodies of Edison and Fat Uncle.

Turning away, he felt his veins run



white again. The wind was white on the water. The heat of afternoon was incredibly, cruelly white as it beat up from the drying decks and the sea.

He turned at last to the girl. With relief he saw her lift her face, as if she had actually been watching him from the cavernous shadow of her hair. The most mysterious thing about her face, he thought, was that she seemed now to be in one respect like Edison. She could not see.

He was prepared for her to start screaming. She did not scream. Instead she turned her face slowly in the direction of the wheel and held it there, transfixed by the sight of the tarpaulin.

He also stared at the tarpaulin. The flaring realization that it covered the body of the man of legends, the great, long voyager, filled him with sudden waves of sorrow for Fat Uncle.

He turned and saw this sorrow of his reflected in her face. Somehow he grasped, incredibly, that it might be sorrow for Edison. He could not understand this. He could remember nothing good of Edison. His abiding impressions of Edison were of a man repellent, sneering, drunken, wasteful, odiously sinister. Edison was of the breed for whom he played on Saturday evenings at the screaming dances: a dirty man.

It even occurred to him, as he stood there for a few moments longer, that sorrow for Edison was a mistaken thing. It even seemed to him possible to be glad that Edison was dead. He even thought the girl might be glad.

WHEN he spoke for the first time it was with an odd detachment, about something he felt to be far removed from these realities.

"That was a great storm," he said. "I've never known a storm like that."

"No," she said. "It was a great storm."

As she spoke, she turned to look at him, for the first time directly, with large black eyes. A sudden burst of wind blew her hair free of her face, leaving it fully exposed. Its sightless lack of expression seemed to imprison her in a terrible bond.

In this same imprisoned, expressionless way she spoke monotonously of the engine: "Does the engine work?" she said. "What about the engine?"

He was glad to follow her down the steps of the companionway. In the hold it was easier now, more secure; the sea was calming down. In the partial gloom he could not see her face so well and he was glad of this. He was glad too to be out of sight of the humped black mound that was Fat Uncle and Edison.

"When did you hide?" she said.

"In the morning. Early. After everyone had gone."

"I think I was asleep when you came," she said. "Do you remember they went back to the hotel and then came back again? That was when I hid. I heard the doctor working on the engine for an hour."

As she spoke she seemed to be searching for something and a second later he knew what it was. "We must have the spanner," she said.

With nausea and fear he remembered where the spanner was. As she realized it too, she stood imprisoned more terribly than ever, unable to move or speak to him.

He went up the companionway. Once more, on deck, his veins ran with whiteness. The sea, running with whiteness too, blazed at his eyeballs.

For a few seconds longer, standing over the tarpaulin, he played a game of hideous guesswork. He guessed that the larger, humpier mound underneath the tarpaulin was the body of Fat Uncle. He guessed that Edison had the spanner.

He snatched at the tarpaulin with sudden desperation and the empty hands of Edison were revealed underneath it. He flung it back again and turned to find himself mocked in the glitter of whiteness prancing up from the sea.

The spanner lay all the time on the deck, six feet away. "Here it is," he said to her.

It was the instinctive thing to give her the spanner as he reached the foot of the hatchway and she promptly dropped it.

He picked it up. Something about the feel of the spanner made him suddenly recall Fat Uncle. He was abruptly glad of Fat Uncle. Sometimes when the soda-bottling machine jammed, it was a favourite theme of Fat Uncle's to bludgeon him into the business of mending it again. His hands, in consequence, had grown quite agile with spanners.

He began to tinker with the engine. The girl brooded beside him, sombrely, terribly quiet. By contrast he began to feel less and less of his nausea, his fear and his horror at the bloody secrets of the tarpaulin up on deck. The spanner gave him the means of grasping at tangible things and he began now to try to cheer the girl with recollections. . . .

"Fat Uncle went on long voyages in this boat," he said. "Once he was blown by a big wind like that."

"Yes?"

"To Australia. All the way to Australia the wind blew him."

"I never heard him talk of that."

"A million miles," he said.

"There is no such thing as a million miles."

"There must be," he said. "Fat Uncle told me so." He felt himself become buoyant at these recollections. "Long, long voyages he went. To Noumea. Across the world. Everywhere."

"Long ago?"

"Oh! Long ago."

"I never heard him talk of it. . . ."

Two hours later he could no longer see to work on the engine. In his own mind he had long since given up the idea that anything he could do would make it work again. His pretence of solving its mysteries was merely part of his pride.

He followed the girl up the hatchway. With averted eyes the pair of them went aft along the deck. "There is a little food left," she said, "if you feel like it."

He could only shake his head. A spurt of sickness squeezed itself acidly up his throat. He managed to say: "Do you feel like it?"

"Some water perhaps. Could you drink some water?"

He could not speak this time. He simply nodded his head.

"The sun has gone," she said.

Holding the water cask in readiness to fill the mug with water, she paused and stood for some time staring at the horizon. The sun had gone down in a startling agony of carmine, purple-black and flame. A few pinkish clouds, like high birds, were flying far overhead, delicate, broken-feathered. The sea, calm now except for the faintest ripples, collected these colours and cast the mingled glow of them back in her face. The features of the face were set and grim, as if carved, their proudness undissolved.

Ten minutes later it was utterly dark except for a slowly expiring gap of rosy copper low down and far away, against the face of the dead calm sea. Something about this calmness, on which the schooner now rode as if locked to an invisible anchor, filled the air with a sense of foreboding so ominous that when the boy finally lay down on the deck, side by side with the girl, it was with his face downwards but slightly averted, listening.

It struck him suddenly that they were there for ever. The schooner was locked against a sea permanently held in deathly silence. Its searing flare of daylight whiteness had given place to a darkness that imprisoned every scrap of motion. He could not detect the slightest drift of the boat one way or another, or the faintest rise of it up and down.

He lay there for a long time in this motionless attitude, completely locked in silence. The girl too was lying face downwards, head buried in her hair. Her hands in turn clutched the side of her hair as if, in a nightmare of remorse and terror, she was suspended in the act of tearing it by the roots.

The horror of what she must be thinking broke on him very gradually. After a long time he turned and lay face upwards, staring at the stars. The sky, like the sea, seemed to be held in a formidable, dark paralysis.

Staring upward, he wondered what he himself could possibly feel like if he had killed a man. Through a horror of his own he passed into a stage of sheer fright at the mere recollection of what lay under the tarpaulin along the deck. When the horror finally lessened and passed it gave way to an enormous sense of wonder; a thankful wonder that he had not, after all, killed a man, and then a terrible wonder that he had actually seen the act, survived it and was alive to remember it all.

He lay for a little longer in a senseless vacuum, not even thinking. A dozen times before this he had expected her to cry. The fact that she did not once show the faintest sign of tears had helped to keep him from weeping.

Suddenly he could not bear any longer her tearless, agonized attitude of seeming to tear her hair out by the roots as she lay there in the darkness. It filled him with a boyish rush of compassion in which he could not refrain from touching her. He moved towards her and put his hands on her shoulders and her hair.

She at once interpreted this groping touch of his as a sign of fear. She turned instinctively and with big, naked arms held him against her. She rocked him backwards and forwards, motherwise, murmuring quietly at the same time.

He found something more than comfort in the touch of her body. It did for him what the sky and the sea had failed to do. It drove away the last impression of ominous foreboding, his feeling that the two of them were locked there for ever. It coaxed him out of his senseless vacuum.

The girl too began to come alive. She actually pressed her mouth against the side of his face. Then he heard her voice framing words for the first time since darkness had come down.

"Don't be afraid."

"I'm not afraid." As he said this, she enveloped him still more closely with her body, and he asked: "Are you afraid?"

"It is not a question of being afraid."

He did not understand this remark and for some moments she did not explain it. Instead she held him still more closely to her, arms completely round him now.

"There is something more than being afraid."

For a second time he was unable to

Beautiful Creatures

by WILFRID THORLEY

The lambs say 'Mirth!
Leap in all limbs that tread on earth.'

The foals say 'Sun!
Fill us that swift as light we run.'

The hawks say 'Sky!
Draw us up to the day's hot eye.'

The trees say 'Sap!
Rise, and with leafage fill God's lap.'

The rose says 'Dew!
Feed me and draw my red buds through.'

God give us words
As brave as bud's and beast's and bird's!

understand her. He was bewildered by a growing sense of mystery about her. Her flesh quivered as she held him. An impression that all the pores of her skin were about to shed their own terrible fears gave her an overwhelming sense of sorrow that he could not bear.

"What is it?" he said. "What is more than being afraid?"

She spoke with a kind of distant calmness in answer. "I have a child inside me," she said.

He did not speak. The gravity of his pride that she had decided to tell him this was so great that he felt suddenly, inside himself, a new stature. He also was old. He also felt he had become, in some strange way, part of her.

"Shall we try to sleep now?" she said. Her voice had taken on a further spell of calmness. The infinite sense of brooding sorrow was at last dispelled. "Come closer to me," she said. "Lie close to me."

He had already closed his eyes. He started, a little later, to sleep peacefully in the warmth of her arms. In the uncanny silence of the completely motionless boat she slept too, holding him like a mother. . . .

He awoke, some time after dawn, to strange noises. He thought at first that the sea had risen and was beating against the sides of the vessel. He opened his eyes and stared upward at a repetition of the flocks of clouds travelling, like pink birds, high across the morning sky.

The sounds troubled him. Like part of a half-remembered dream they mocked at his expanding consciousness with strange familiarity.

Finally he got up. He could no longer resist the reality of the sounds. He walked along the deck. Half way to the bows he stopped, horrified by the astounding emptiness of the deck about the wheel, stunned by an incredible illusion that the tarpaulin had been carefully folded up and laid at the head of the hatchway.

In the moment of realizing that the bodies of Edison and Fat Uncle no longer lay there, he realized also that the engine was running.

He stood staring down the steps of the hatchway for fully a minute before realizing that the blood-stained face of the man he saw bending over the engine was the face of Fat Uncle.

A new horror rose up in him. The impression that he was staring down at a figure spirited back from the dead was too much for his calmness. He felt his veins run sick and white again.

Almost at the same moment he heard Fat Uncle begin speaking. "I remembered we only put half a tank in," he said. The half-idiotic lips gaped upward, brown with blood. "No wonder we stopped."

The boy started to answer with a series of broken phrases that made no sense with the exception of the word "Edison? Edison?" which he blubbered over and over again.

With fat crooked fingers Fat Uncle waved upward, towards the rising light. "He's gone where he said he'd send you," he said. "Out there."

FOR the first time the boy broke into weeping. His choking tears had nothing to do with Edison, nor with the sudden appearance of Fat Uncle, back from the dead. He was weeping at an unknown horror that seemed to be crawling up from the whitening sea, on all sides of him, in a nightmare.

The sound of his weeping brought the girl running along the deck. She too heard the sound of the engine and stopped abruptly. "Timi! Timi!" she was shouting. "Timi!" The sudden joy on her face woke in him fresh bursts of weeping. "Why do you cry? How did you make it go?"

The head of Fat Uncle rose above the top of the hatchway. And the girl, seeing it, let out her own grievous cry. . . .

A land rose from the sea. A long, serrated cockscomb of green and violet seemed to float out of the horizon under a scalding sun.

Like a caricature of a warrior scarred in battle, Fat Uncle stood grasping the wheel with enormous, aggressive hands, staring straight ahead. His face, with muscles set, no longer seemed flabby. It seemed to be contained in a metallic, greasy mask. Dark crusts of blood had congealed and dried across the forehead, heightening the yellow of the skin and giving the impression of a man wrapped in a brooding, savage frown.

The girl once dipped a bucket into the sea. She was moved to bathe the bloodstained face and started to tear a strip of cloth from her *pareu;* but Fat Uncle bashed into the silence of the deck with a slam of a vast hand against the wheel and a bruising cry across the white calm sea.

"Let them stop there. Let the world see them. Let them see how he tried to kill me."

After that the girl crouched against the side of the boat, head enclosed in the falling mass of her hair, hands flat on the rail. She stared for some hours in speechless concentration at the land enlarging with incredible slowness on the horizon, while the boy, ordered by Fat Uncle, washed blood from the deck.

Now and then Fat Uncle broke into long, senseless abuse of Edison. He shouted with lunatic contempt at the evil of fate, spitting at the sea. At the end of these outbursts he struck at the wheel again with a strange mixture of pride and childishness, laughing, giggling fatly.

"Now she's mine. Now I've got her back." His idiot pride in the material possession of the boat made him seem more than ever swollen. "She was always mine. She always belonged to me."

The boy was struck by these outbursts into a watchful awe. He tried for a long time to work out a reason for Fat Uncle's pride in his scars. He understood the pride in the schooner, but that of the scars eluded him completely until Fat Uncle yelled: "You saw the fight. How did I kill him? Tell me that."

It did not occur to the boy that this was evidence of cowardice in Fat Uncle. He heard the words with amazed bewilderment. He heard Fat Uncle give a laugh of triumph, as if actually glad that he had killed a man.

He was about to shatter this illusion by telling Fat Uncle the truth when he saw the girl, moving for the first time for some hours, slowly turn her face, pushing back her hair with both hands. The face, paralysed with fright, looked unbelievably cold in the heat of the day, frozen against the background of an ocean across which, at last, a wind was rising, cutting brief slits of foam from the crests of the long smooth swells.

"Tell me how I killed him. I don't remember." Fat Uncle struck attitudes of boldness, flinging out oil-stained, contemptuous arms. "I remember he came up behind me—like that. . . . He crouched with grotesque ape-like fury in imitation of Edison. "Like that he came up, didn't he? I remember that."

He spat again with galling, contemptuous laughter. "From behind!" he roared across the deck. "Like a rat—from behind!"

For a long time the boy nursed his dilemma, watching first the girl, then the land becoming more and more clearly defined every moment across the white-fringed sea. He could actually make out now the collar of the island's enclosing reef and soon he could see the colour of the mountains beyond, yellow-brown at the foot, sharp emerald high up the slopes, with dark palm tufts on the shore and in between.

Once or twice he opened his mouth to speak, but the words never framed themselves. Hearing Fat Uncle laugh again, he pondered gravely, with eyes that seemed, as always, to be listening to half-formed sounds, on the astonishing fact that a man might be glad to kill a man.

Held in a horror between truth and silence, he was troubled by a growing recollection, more bewildering to him now than when it had happened, of the girl telling him of the child inside herself and of her mystifying words: *There is something more than being afraid.*

These were all strange mysteries, not of his making. He could not interpret them. He could only interpret the embalming warmth of the girl's arms in the depth of night-time, quietening him to sleep, holding him so closely that he was almost one with the other body inside her own.

That was a still stranger mystery: the child inside herself. He brooded on that until compassion and wonder held him in a trance, sightlessly.

He was woken out of it by a yell from Fat Uncle: "I see the gap." With the quaking, triumphant fingers of a man who might have made, single-handed, an uncharted voyage across cruel waters, he pointed ahead. "We're nearly there. Boy, take the wheel a moment while I get below."

The boy grasped the wheel. In the few seconds while Fat Uncle was below, the girl came and stood beside him. He turned, not speaking, and looked at her sad, gentle, brooding face, wrapped in dignity. He searched it for a sign of fear and at the same moment searched his own mind for something to say to her.

A second later the engine slowed to half-speed. She smiled gravely. Without a word she put her hand on his shoulder and a moment later Fat Uncle came up on deck.

"I'll take her now." He brandished, in his ape-like, childish fashion, a pair of arms that seemed as if they were about to embrace himself. "I'll take her in."

As he moved to grasp the wheel, the girl spoke quietly. "Let the boy take her a little farther," she said. "He deserves that. It would make him very proud to take her a little farther."

There were still a few hundred yards to go.

"Take her." Fat Uncle again waved generous, expansive arms, laughing. "How does she feel? How do you like her?"

As the boy, grasping the wheel, stared into hot sunlight with solemn, far-seeing eyes, a strange illusion affected him. It was that the boat, though down to half-speed, was travelling faster than ever, running with flying swiftness across white-fledged water towards the steaming gap and the mountains beyond.

"How does she feel?" Fat Uncle shouted. "How does she go?"

The veins of the boy ran with pride. The entire sea about him ran with wonderful whiteness. He turned swiftly to show his pride to the girl and saw that there were tears in her eyes. These tears, unfallen, imprisoned her brooding eyes with a troubled, crystalline brightness. She too was proud.

Exultantly he half threw up his hands. A boy might travel a million miles and never see what he had seen. He might live through a million nights and never hear what he had heard. Solemnly he was glad he had been afraid with her and because of it he felt he understood, at last, her tears, her pride and above all her brooding darkness.

"She goes like the wind," he shouted. "Like the wind!" THE END

STRANGE TALES OF THE SEA • 7

by Commander Douglas Duff

Five men lived in a capsized ship

SOMETIMES when a ship capsizes and turns her keel towards the sky she may remain afloat indefinitely, supported by the air compressed inside her inverted hull. Few sailormen trapped inside such a vessel have ever escaped for, if a hole is made to free them, the air gushes out and the wreck founders.

The Nerina was a wooden ship on passage from Dunkirk to the Mediterranean, with a cargo of tiles, in the first year of this century. She ran into a mighty storm off the Western Ocean and, thirty-six miles south-west of the Scilly Isles, she was swept by a mountainous sea which turned her right over. Only the ship's keel and bilges showed above the waves.

Inside her, five men were trapped, two seamen were in the forecastle, while the captain, the mate and cabin boy were imprisoned aft.

The cargo had dropped away from the bottom on to the underside of the upper deck, and the sea filled more than three-quarters of the remaining space, leaving water surging against the cushion of compressed air which alone was keeping the ship afloat.

The two seamen in the forecastle managed to get through the bulkhead into the hold and, breast-deep in water, walking on the inverted cargo, they wriggled their way aft, hoping to find some escape hole. In the rolling, pounding darkness they reached the after-bulkhead and heard shouts in the bilges above the water-filled cabin.

The three men there had climbed through a trapdoor in the deck as the vessel turned turtle and the ocean rushed in, and were crouching close to the keelson. Between them, they broke an entrance for the two sailors and all joined forces in the eighteen inches of air-space between the water and the ship's bottom. They were there for four days and nights. Fortunately, the mate's sheath-knife broke off short when he tried to cut a hole through the stout timbers. If he had succeeded they must have drowned.

Hope slowly died as the ship lurched and tumbled about and the air grew steadily fouler. But, on their fifth night, there came a mighty, jarring crash. The Nerina rose and fell several times with devastating heaviness, hammering the five men inside her. Then, slowly, the water dropped away from around their chests and continued to fall until their feet were clear. They knew they were ashore and that the tide was ebbing.

When dawn came, they struggled back into the hold and through a great hole battered in the ship's broadside, and staggered out to greet the Scilly Islanders coming out to see what the wreck, stranded on their beach at Port Hellick, on St. Mary's island, might contain.

There is no other record of men surviving so long from a ship which had floated bottom-up.

The crucial call

Continued from page 13

other's throats." He hesitated. "Now please don't be offended at what I'm going to say."

"I'm listening."

"This is unofficial, of course, and I'm not in a position to offer anything concrete. But I do know that my directors would be most interested to know if you would assume special responsibility for this area," Yardley paused, smiling. Then he added: "On Colly's behalf."

So that was it, Neil thought with gloomy satisfaction. His suspicion had been correct. . . .

"Naturally," Yardley went on, "Colly's would offer compensation for your business and premises; and, in similar cases, I believe the payment has been considered not only fair but generous."

"Should I continue to manufacture?"

Yardley shrugged: "It would be mainly an administrative appointment, although we should almost certainly wish to take advantage of your technical ability. Yours would be the overall responsibility, and the aim would be to build up a sales force. You would not, yourself, be doing the selling." Yardley looked at Neil squarely. "I have the impression," he said, "that you might find it a congenial set-up."

Neil let that pass. He said: "You haven't answered my question."

"Colly's have a standard product," Yardley said. "On the other hand, we're always looking for improvements, and it might be possible to test yours with a view to production at a later date. In the meantime, I expect your —er—factory would be used as a store."

"There's no need for any tests," Neil said. "It so happens that my article is better than Colly's."

Yardley smiled. He said: "Cost is equally important these days, we find. And in the long run it's the customer who has the answer to that one, if we care to fight it out to a conclusion.

"But that would hurt both of us. I'm trying to avoid that. Anyway, if you are at all interested in this suggestion, I'm sure that you could negotiate a top-weight salary and expenses. How do you feel about it?"

It was a temptation. It would mean no more crippling worries; no more anxious studying of the bank statement, wondering if an invoice would be settled before the bills fell due, a steady, secure salary, with a pleasant nest-egg to tuck away; the house that Ruth wanted.

Neil smiled to himself. A new bicycle would certainly be no problem.

After all, it was only what he already contemplated. It provided a tailor-made way out. Perhaps that was the trouble. It was too easy, with its bland assumption of inevitable failure.

Neil shook his head, bewildered at himself. Arthur would get his money back and a bit more besides. Ruth? Surely she would see that it was a golden opportunity?

Wasn't it sensible to get out before certain ruin overtook him? Wasn't that just what he had urged Arthur to do?

And yet . . . to give up just like that, to kill the company cold-bloodedly after all the work and dreams that had gone into it?

"I should like to think it over," Neil said.

"Naturally. I know it will be a most difficult decision to make. But you might bear in mind that Colly's are in this area to stay. And I'm sure you

MISTAKES—I

A man should never be ashamed to own he has been in the wrong, which is but saying that he is wiser today than he was yesterday.

Jonathan Swift

MOST ECONOMICAL BRITISH 4 SEATER— THE NEW AUSTIN A.35

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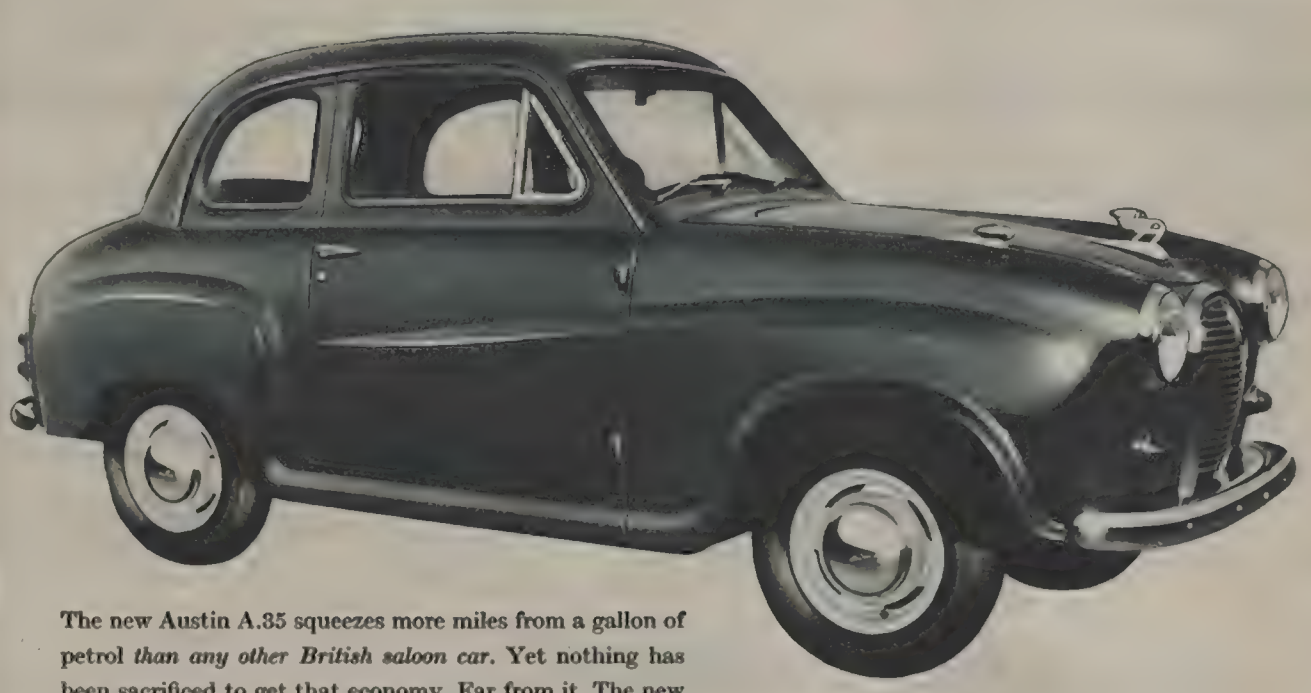

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These figures were taken from the MOTOR *Road Test No. 28/56 published on 21st November, 1956.*

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will appreciate that there is a big difference between Colly's asking you to join them, and"—Yardley gestured apologetically—"you asking to join Colly's."

So there was, however discreetly concealed, a mailed fist with "or else" written on it. . . .

Neil stood up. "I think I'll go back to my carriage," he said.

Yardley looked up at him. His handsome face had lost its habitual smile.

"Speaking personally, Mr. Terry," he said, "I'm sorry we're on opposite sides of the fence. Colly's have been very good to me and I think they're a grand firm. But I've seen small men who wouldn't come to terms get badly hurt." He went on, almost pleadingly: "Colly's are so big. They've got capital, mass-production techniques, sales aids. It's very difficult for a man without those resources to keep his head above water."

Neil didn't answer for a moment. Then he said: "I don't suppose you ever saw old Waldron Colly?"

"The founder of our firm? No."

"I met him once when I was hardly more than a boy. I was running in an athletics match against Colly's. He presented the medals and we talked for a little while. I think he was lonely. He was a very old man. He began his working life as a blacksmith, with no capital, no resources, nothing. Even Colly's, Mr. Yardley, were small once."

"That was in the nineteenth century," Yardley said seriously. "Things are very different today. Is it quite comparable?"

BACK in his carriage, Neil thought that over. Was it true, he wondered, that it was no longer possible to build a company up beyond a certain size? What would old Waldron Colly have done?

He remembered the old man clearly; tough, curt, with no social charms or graces. Waldron Colly, he thought, smiling faintly, would probably have disliked Yardley intensely.

They were just running into Guildford. Neil got out and made his way through the barrier. Outside, Yardley was just climbing into a taxi. He called: "Can I give you a lift?"

Neil walked over. "No thanks. I'm not going far."

"Oh. I'm going to see Edward Halliday. I thought you might be calling on him, too."

Neil knew that this was no casual remark. It was meant to shake him. And it did. He hoped that his face didn't show his sick apprehension.

"I expect I'll see you on the train going back," he said at random.

Yardley shook his head. "I'm staying overnight. You will bear our conversation in mind, won't you? I shall be visiting my head office the day after tomorrow. Perhaps you'd like to come with me and talk it over with the director concerned."

So now the ultimatum was complete, with the expiry date fixed. After that, there would be no talking terms.

Yardley said: "I shall be at the Lansdowne Hotel."

Neil watched the taxi drive away. He followed on foot, and walked towards the bus terminus. . . .

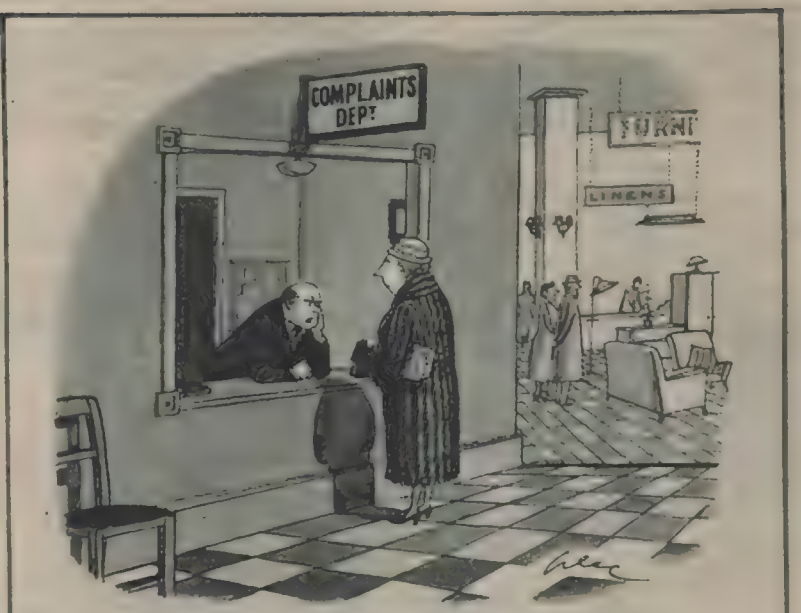
By mid-afternoon, when Neil tramped up to Edward Halliday's office, he was weary and disconsolate. Nothing had gone right. He had been met with evasions, and sometimes closed doors. He had obtained no new business and only one small repeat order. As a life-saving day, it had been a complete washout.

He went in through the swing doors, pushed his card across, said: "Mr. Halliday, please," and leaned gratefully on to the counter.

The receptionist went into a glass-walled recess and seemed to take a very long time on the telephone. She came back and said: "I can't seem to find Mr. Halliday, sir. Can you come back another time?"

"I'll wait," Neil said firmly, and sat down on a hard chair.

The receptionist glanced at him doubtfully, but said nothing. Neil sat, while time crawled by, feeling his last remaining fragment of optimism



"And the canteen is the same—food's terrible . . . and then look at the wages . . ."

evaporate, leaving only a desolate hopelessness. Telephones rang, people came and went, but there was no word for him. He began to look at the clock anxiously. If Halliday didn't see him soon, he would miss the train.

At last he stood up and went to the counter. He said to the receptionist: "I have been seeing Mr. Halliday regularly for the last eighteen months. He likes me to call on the same day every month. This is that day. Will you please try to find Mr. Halliday?"

The receptionist took his card again and this time she disappeared upstairs.

She was gone a long while. When she came back she didn't look at him. She said: "I have been asked to say thank you for calling, but we do not require anything today."

Speechless, Neil turned and walked out through the doors. He hated that hoary old cliché about "thank you for calling" at the best of times, but to have it from one whom he had believed to be a steady customer was stunning.

He walked aimlessly along, trying to pull himself together. It was Yardley, of course. Well, there was one thing, and in a way it was a relief. He knew

MISTAKES—2

Half our mistakes in life arise from feeling where we ought to think, and thinking where we ought to feel.

Churton Collins

now that he was finished. There was no longer any point in fighting.

At the station he was in time to see the train pulling away and, in a way, he was glad. Now he would have to phone Ruth and it would be easier to tell her over the telephone. He knew that he couldn't look her in the eyes and tell the half-truths that he had in mind.

He walked to a telephone box and waited while the operator got the number. When Ruth answered, he said, trying to make his voice cheerful: "I shall be late home tonight, darling. I've got an important meeting this evening."

"Is it a new client?"

"Not exactly." He hesitated and then went on quickly: "Ruth, I've had a most wonderful offer. Colly's want me to take over the area for them. It'll mean much more money. They'll buy me out and we'll be able to. . . ."

He talked hurriedly on, waiting for some sign of approval from Ruth. None came.

In the end he subsided rather than stopped talking. Ruth said then: "I've never heard such nonsense in all my life. Why go to work for somebody else when you've a perfectly good business of your own?"

Neil sighed. He would have to tell her the whole truth.

"My dear," he said quietly, "it's not a perfectly good business. It's a hangman's noose."

Then, soberly, he told her the whole story. He left out nothing and finished by explaining the body blow of losing the Halliday account.

When he'd finished, Ruth said: "It's not like you to run away."

"I'm not running away," Neil said, stung. "I'm simply facing facts."

"What facts? You say yourself that yours is a better article than Colly's."

"There's more to it than that. They're offering cut prices, long-term contracts."

"What are your stocks like?"

This wasn't going at all the way Neil had hoped. "Pretty high," he said. "We haven't moved much lately."

"They're no use to you in the warehouse. Use them. Use them as ammunition. Use them to beat Colly's at their own game."

"That's a short-term policy. I'd be running on capital. They can do it because of their turnover."

"You'd be buying time with stocks which are useless to you anyway if you're going to give up. You haven't got Colly's overheads. In time, you could compete on level terms. In the meantime you'll have to cut out every non-essential and some of the essentials as well."

Neil felt limp and as if he had been scoured out inside. He said with an effort: "I did have something of the sort in mind, but Halliday is my only contact with national connections. And I've told you—he refused to see me today."

"Then make him see you."

"How?" asked Neil.

"Go to his house. Make him listen to you."

What a ridiculous idea, Neil thought. Fancy knocking on Halliday's door and saying. . . . Then he checked himself. What *would* he say?

"Darling," Ruth said, her voice low. "I love you, and I love you because you're my man. If you head the biggest firm in the country I shall love you, and if Colly's grind you into the dust and ruin you, I shall love you, because you'll still be the same man. But you'd have to give me time to get used to the man who wants to give up before he's been beaten."

Neil found that his lips were dry. "All right, Ruth," he said, trying to raise a smile. "If you want to be ruined, I'm the man to do it."

Her chuckle of delight warmed him. "I'm sorry," she said. "I've been unkind."

"No. I needed sorting out. I should have talked it over with you before." Neil stared blindly through the panes of glass in the side of the telephone box. "Ruth, if this comes off at all. . . . The children are getting bigger. Simon could go to nursery school. Would you come back into business . . . help me? Take over this side of it?"

"Goodness, I can smell the supper burning," Ruth said suddenly. "No Neil, thank you. I'm much too fond of my home. I should hate it, dear."

"Go and retrieve the supper."

"I've been thinking, you know, that Mark is really too young to have a bicycle. Next year would be much more suitable."

"It'll be burned to a crisp."

"And I'm not sure that I should like to leave this house. Not just yet anyway. We've been very happy here."

"I'll call you later, darling."

Neil was smiling as he replaced the receiver. Ruth was eminently practical. He flipped through the telephone directory, found *Halliday, Edward,* and noted his address. His smile faded at the thought of another blasted bus ride.

Halliday's house was up a side road from the bus stop. It was dark now and Neil groped his way into the drive, stumbling once into the rhododendrons.

The glass panels of the front door glowed from the light inside and he looked at them for some seconds. It would be easier to retrace his footsteps, stay the night, tell Ruth that Halliday had refused him. . . .

He shook himself and thumbed the bellpush.

Halliday himself came to the door. He peered into the darkness outside and said, surprised: "Oh, Terry. It's you."

"I'm sorry to intrude on you, but it's necessary that I see you."

"Well," Halliday hesitated and then stood aside. "Come in."

Neil followed the short, stocky figure across the hall into a study. He knew Halliday as well as he knew any of his business contacts. They had discussed the weather, sport and, more cautiously, politics. They had lunched together several times, played golf once. He would have said that he was on good terms with Halliday. And much good it had done him, he thought.

A corner of his mind produced the remembered figure of tough, uncompromising old Waldron Colly. Toughness would suit his present mood, he reflected. And he certainly couldn't be any worse off.

Halliday switched on the lights and waved at an armchair. He said: "Sit down. What can I do for you?"

"I'll stand if you don't mind. You might want to throw me out again."

Halliday grinned. "Surely not."

"We've done business now for some time. Today, without explanation, I was refused an interview."

Halliday looked surprised. "How was that?"

Neil told him. Halliday said: "I was called out this afternoon. I asked my assistant to deal with you. He had no right to send such a message. I must apologize to you. Do sit down."

Neil perched on an armchair. He was beginning to feel slightly better.

Halliday said gently: "At the same time I must tell you that he also had no authority to place an order. It had been decided to use Colly's."

"Why?"

"Well, you know that our Guildford branch is only one of many. We're buying Colly's for the other branches. It seems logical to extend the benefits of Colly's service to Guildford."

"Have you had the two products evaluated?"

"Yes. And I will admit frankly that your quality is rather higher."

"Then wouldn't it be equally logical to allow me to supply your other branches?"

"But surely you operate in a limited area?"

"We can operate anywhere in the country," Neil said flatly.

"I see." Halliday pulled out his pipe and slowly lit it. "I wasn't aware of that," he said, puffing. "But it really doesn't affect the issue. I may as well be candid and tell you that Colly's price is only just over half yours. I simply cannot afford to ignore that difference, even for one branch."

All right, Neil thought, now we crawl

out on to a limb. "You wouldn't," he said, "expect to get a superior article at the same price."

"No, but the difference——"

"I'll quote you ten per cent above Colly's price, with a three-year price maintenance guarantee."

"Colly's are only giving two years," Halliday said attentively. "We could certainly look at Guildford again on that basis."

"I'm not quoting for Guildford," Neil said, "I'm quoting for a minimum of half your organization."

"I'm relieved that you don't want the whole of it," Halliday remarked, his eyes twinkling with amusement.

"That wouldn't be good business on your part. With two suppliers you could have a constant basis for comparison. I should welcome that comparison."

"And two suppliers can't hold us up to ransom as one might," Halliday said thoughtfully. "I have been a little concerned about that." He stared at Neil in silence. "Look," he said suddenly, "can you really handle this?"

"Our rebuilding project is well advanced," Neil said, thinking of the crumpled, discarded plans. He went on more truthfully: "It was decided today to extend our activities. Your own lawyers are welcome to draw up the contracts. You've known me for some time. I don't know what more I can say."

He sat back now in his chair. He had shot his last bolt. He felt exhausted, wrung out.

Halliday grunted and knocked out his pipe. He said: "It's certainly true that you've given us good service. And I've signed nothing with Colly's."

Neil waited, watching Halliday's face. Was it the lifebelt . . . or the axe?

Halliday stood up. "All right," he said. "I don't know about half, but . . . we'll see. Can you be at my office at ten o'clock tomorrow morning? We'll discuss the details."

Neil became aware that he was soaked in nervous perspiration. . . .

Half an hour later he was standing on the plushy carpet of the lounge bar of the Lansdowne Hotel. There was a public telephone box in one corner. Yardley was sitting at the bar.

Neil went across, leaned on the bar, and said: "Will you have a drink?"

Yardley turned, smiling. "Thanks very much. Scotch all right?"

Neil signalled to the barman. "Two Scotches, please."

Yardley said: "Can I have the pleasure of greeting you as a colleague?"

"That depends on you," Neil said.

"How?"

"I think we shall be opening up. We could do with a damn good salesman. How would you like to cover Middlesex for us?"

Yardley stared, and then burst out laughing. "Congratulations," he said. "Believe it or not, but I'm delighted. I'm not too fond of the rôle of hatchet man." He shook his head. "I was afraid I didn't have Edward Halliday tied up," he added regretfully.

"It's a perfectly serious offer," Neil said.

"No thanks," Yardley said. "I only start up new areas these days. I'm an office man really." He picked up his glass. "And yet," he went on thoughtfully, "I would have sworn that you were ready to quit this morning."

"I talked to my wife," Neil said. "Waldron Colly helped a bit, too." He drained his glass in one gulp. "Excuse me," he said, "but I must telephone."

He turned and began to thread his way across the bar. He couldn't wait to tell Ruth the news. THE END

MISTAKES—3

The man who makes no mistakes does not usually make anything.

W. C. Magee

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I will remember

Continued from page 31

never spoke about it. But sometimes, in those last few minutes before the summer night came swiftly down, he stood at the veranda, looking towards the hill where the hut was. Then, when it was completely dark, he'd slap the ledge with the palm of his hand, wearily, and go to bed.

Queenie, though she had seemed anxious about the hut to me, never mentioned it again either. It was as though they had both pushed it into the pasts of their minds, trying to forget it. In his quiet, plodding way, Uncle Cy was absolutely firm that the hut should stand, saying, when anyone started talking about bananas, that he didn't want to start a plantation anyway.

But the fire changed that. The fire changed everything.

EARLY one afternoon I was on the veranda, looking in the direction of Ngarla beach. It was a hot day, with a warm wind coming in low from the sea; greenery and plants shimmered behind that hanging heat, as if the earth were boiling. I thought it strange, at first, that there should be a mist on a day like this, till I saw, a few minutes later, black clouds swirling heavily against the unrelieved blue sky.

Uncle Cy was sitting on the other side of the veranda, fixing new rubber teats to the milking machine cups. He heard my shout and came round. When I indicated the fire, he rushed into the house and returned with a pair of binoculars.

After focusing them for a few seconds, he turned to me and said: "Get on that bike and ride like hell to Queenie's place. Tell her the fire'll be here in half an hour—it's got the wind behind it, coming straight along the hill range. Tell her to ring the army camp at Ngarla—they may be able to send some men out. Go on."

I fell off the bike twice on the way to Queenie's place, feeling an anxiety like fear hammering under my ribs as I rode down the sticky bitumen road. It was so hot that parts of the road were almost bubbling, and on either side of the bitumen fierce sunlight beat on the red clay cliffs, throwing an uncomfortable light in my eyes.

Queenie's mouth sagged and her eyes hooded with fear when I told her about the fire. She immediately rushed to the post-office section of the store, and a few seconds later I heard her cracked, shaking voice on the phone: "Get over to his place quick. That farm'll go up like paper if you don't."

Then she came out, ramming an old straw hat on her head, and went to a utility truck outside. "Get in," she ordered.

I had hardly closed the truck door before she accelerated away from the store. She drove furiously, her old eyes grim behind the rimless spectacles. Before we turned off the main road on to the dust track leading a mile to the farm, we could see the smoke hanging low in the sky and, as we drove up the tufty path to the farmhouse, we could hear the savage crackling of the fire.

Queenie stopped the truck and went over to Uncle Cy, who was at a water tap, soaking a lot of sacks. She said: "I rang the army camp at Ngarla. They're sending men out."

"Yes. But when?" Without waiting for a reply, Uncle Cy started running to the silo with the sacks. "Bring those spades; we might be able to dig a firebreak," he called over his shoulder.

I took two spades and ran after him. Queenie followed. We ran past the silo, past the old hut, to a thickly-grown area, where Uncle Cy dumped the sacks.

Queenie gaped at him. "What are you going to do?"

"We'll start a firebreak here," Uncle Cy said. "It's pretty narrow, shouldn't take long. That way, the fire should burn itself out before it gets to the farm."

"But why start it here?" Queenie said. "Why not do it a few yards behind the hut? That gives us more time. The rate that fire's going now, we wouldn't have a chance of finishing it."

"The army blokes'll be here," Uncle Cy said. "They'll help us get it done quicker."

"Don't be a fool." Queenie almost shouted. "You just want to save that hut, that's all. When are you going to grow up, Cy? We can start a firebreak behind the hut—it's no good to you any more. . . . Cy!"

But he was already digging furiously, not listening.

Presently, an army truck pulled up at the gates and more than twenty national service trainees hopped out of the back and started running up the track. They all had spades or wet sacks, and some had extinguishers on their backs.

The lieutenant in charge stared at Uncle Cy. "The fire's almost here," he said. "You'll have to dig the break farther back. You'll never make it that way. Come on," he ordered his men and they started to run back.

"No!" Uncle Cy implored. "We can start it here. We've got time."

"Are you crazy?" the lieutenant said. "I'm responsible for the lives of my men, and I'm not digging any breaks *that* close to the fire. You'll be roasting in another ten minutes. We can dig a break a few yards the other side of that hut there, so the fire should burn itself out before it reaches your silo. When we get that done, we can start burning back from fifty yards. We'll burn a strip of thirty yards and, by the time the fire gets to it, she'll stay there, because there'll be nothing to burn. So come on. We're wasting time."

"But the hut——"

"The hell with your hut, mister! It's the farm we're worried about." The lieutenant turned again to his men. "Start digging that scrub away."

Uncle Cy looked appealingly to Queenie, but she shook her head slowly. "It's the only way," she said. "The hut had too big a hold on you. It would be better if it was got rid of. It was never meant for a memorial anyway." And she picked up a sack and followed the soldiers.

Uncle Cy hesitated a moment, looked at me as if I could help, then slowly followed Queenie, with the fire roaring less than a hundred yards behind him. The soldiers had started digging. A long, wide break began to appear rapidly across the top of the hill, and behind it they had laid the wet sacks.

By now the smoke of the fire was drifting ahead with the sea wind, and soon the men began to tie handkerchiefs round their faces. By the time the break was made wide enough, the song of the fire was in the air, deep, roaring, crackling like the buzzing of bees a thousand times amplified.

In the hazy grey fog of smoke we could see angry little eyes of light twinkling here and there. The fire was feeding deep in the undergrowth, and above that there was nothing but thick, suffocating smoke. The actual fire was now less than a hundred yards from the break, eating rapidly, hungrily towards it.

"Okay!" the lieutenant shouted and, at the order, his men threw down their shovels, picked up sacks, and advanced into the smoke, coughing and shielding their eyes. Uncle Cy went with them while Queenie held me back.

They had only gone five yards, but they seemed to disappear. Then, after a short while, a small flame sprang up thirty yards from the break they had made. It leaped up and grew, and by its light we saw the soldiers raising their sacks and whacking them down on the big fire, the original one, trying to calm it. But it was like an uncontrollable, strong, spoiled beast, and quickly the men gave up and ran back past the hut to the other side of the firebreak. There they turned, watching the fire push out its breast and roll on.

"I hope the break stops it," the lieutenant said. "We burned most of it back. We'll have to wait and see whether the big fire reaches over or not."

The big fire looked as if it could reach over all right, for it was bearing down at tree-height. But the trees were moistly green, and the flames were mainly attacking the dry, soft undergrowth.

The counter-fire the soldiers had started was picking up now, fanned to angry life by the wind. In a few minutes there was a ten-yard strip of black, smouldering nothingness. Charred grass fell and was blown here and there like a woman's soft hair in the wind. A hundred yards away we caught a fleeting last glimpse of the old hut, with a fire on either side of it.

Then, in a sudden, savage roar, the two fires joined together. The dry poles twisted and snapped, falling inwards, throwing up sparks in the dark smoke like yellow fog-lights. The fires fought there like two living things, rearing up and roaring. They burned a long time. I marvelled at a fire burning so long on merely an old wooden hut.

Then the fire raced on a few yards into the charred no-man's land, burning low on the ground, searching hungrily for lantana, trees, undergrowth; on the lower slopes of the hill the soldiers were beating out the feelers of fire that tried to slip through the green ferns.

Uncle Cy was sweating as the fire raged. Dirt, mingled with sweat, ran in black trickles from his neck, from his iron-grey hairline into his dazed eyes. Queenie sat on a tree stump and blew at a strand of hair which was sticking to her wet, red forehead.

"It's going to stop," she said calmly, without triumph. "Look, Cy."

The fire was still roaring, but was staying in the one spot. The smoke was darker now. In fifteen minutes the clearing was a black, charred mass of delicate charcoal skeletons, with sullen little flames here and there, futilely searching for dry wood.

"Well, that's that," the lieutenant said. He wiped his face with a handkerchief. "We'll get back to camp now."

Uncle Cy looked up. "Wait a minute," he said. The soldiers turned and watched him, waiting, faint impatience in their eyes. "You'll all be thirsty." He spoke cautiously, uncertainly. "I got a keg of home-brew in the shed down there. . . ."

For a moment the lieutenant's expression didn't change. Then he turned to his men. "We're still on duty," he said. "But"—he shrugged, grinning—"I reckon we deserve it." He turned to Uncle Cy. "Lead the way, mister."

Uncle Cy hesitated, looking back at the spot where the hut had been. It was now black dust, lost among the ash of the trees. It was impossible to tell a hut had ever stood there at all.

"Don't feel bad about it," Queenie said. "You know it had to happen. Lenore never meant you to go on being lonely. I know she didn't. And she never meant you to leave that hut there, ruining the farm's progress, reminding you that she was dead. It's been a long time Cy, and now it's time to look ahead, not back."

Uncle Cy was still dazed. "Yes," he said. He picked up his old hat from where it had fallen during the fire, and dusted it with that quiet, sober dignity he'd always had. He stuck the hat on his head. "Maybe you're right at that, Queenie girl," he said wearily. "Maybe you're right at that."

We went down to the grain shed with the soldiers. Uncle Cy had one glass of beer with them, but he said nothing. Then he and Queenie got up and went to the door.

"Hey, aren't you going to stay for a few more pots?" a soldier asked.

Uncle Cy shook his head slowly. "You blokes help yourselves. Queenie's going to make me a cup of tea."

The soldiers laughed understandingly. "Getting domesticated, are you?" one called.

Uncle Cy didn't answer. He turned, and pressed Queenie's hand gratefully. And, as they went out together, I saw him smile, wryly, like a man who has just seen himself plain. THE END

"Yes, Ted gave me an electric floor polisher to save me from breaking my back polishing"

MISTAKES—4

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H. G. Bohn

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BCS33/454

These men are dangerous

Continued from page 16

uniform. "Most of the hotels have been bombed."

"We'll have a look, anyway," said Maclean. "Thanks—and good night."

"Good night."

They found a hole in the fence and walked across railway lines to a patch of shingle at the foot of a quay.

Stirling went off on a reconnaissance with Alston while Maclean and Cooper tried to inflate the boat. The bellows squeaked and a voice hailed them sharply from a nearby ship.

"*Chi va là?*"

"*Militari,*" shouted Maclean.

"What are you doing?"

"Shut up and mind your own business. It's nothing to do with you."

Silence. They pumped for several minutes, but the boat remained obstinately flat. It had a puncture. The only thing to do was to fetch a spare boat from the wagon.

After concealing the damaged boat, together with the explosives, beside the quay wall, they crawled through the fence and went back to Churchill and Rose, who were busily parking the wagon in the yard of a bombed house. Passers-by watched with interest.

Maclean and Cooper eventually arrived on the shingle with the second boat, but found to their acute despair that it, too, was punctured. They had left it near the first one and made yet another trip through the fence on their way to the wagon when they met Stirling. He was anxious because he had been looking for them and wondered where they were.

They held a conference. The situation was becoming desperate. By now, Saturday morning's dawn was half an hour away. They abandoned the plan for sabotage—the value of the expedition would have to be in the reconnaissance—and decided to hide until the next night, when they could try to get out of the town. First, though, if the alarm was not to be raised, they had to remove the traces of their visit by retrieving the boats and explosives from the shingle.

MACLEAN was crawling through the hole in the fence when he saw a fierce, black-faced Askari corporal pointing a rifle and bayonet at him.

"What do you want?" asked Maclean in Italian.

"*Non parlare Italiano,*" said the corporal, prodding him with the bayonet.

"What!" exclaimed Maclean witheringly, standing up and brushing dust from his knees. "And you a corporal! Fancy that: a corporal not knowing Italian!"

The Askari lowered his bayonet in shame. Maclean expanded on the same theme, gesticulating as he talked. The Askari could not understand a word. He turned and walked away.

They reached the water's edge, collected the boats and explosives and started out for the fence, but then it was noticed that the party had two new members. A couple of sentries with rifles and fixed bayonets had tagged on behind.

Their presence was decidedly unwelcome. A stealthy exit from the harbour was out of the question. It would be necessary to leave in the proper manner through the main gate.

Maclean strode up to the sentry at the gate and asked to speak to the guard commander. The sentry fetched a very sleepy sergeant.

"I am an officer of the general staff," said Maclean. "Are you responsible for security here?"

"Yes, sir," said the sergeant.

"Then why is it," demanded Maclean, raising his voice, "that I and my friends have been able to wander around without being properly challenged or asked for our identity cards? Answer me that."

The sergeant shuffled awkwardly, and the sentries who had joined the party thought it wiser to withdraw. "You have been guilty of the gravest dereliction of duty," went on Maclean. "For all you know, we could have been British saboteurs."

The sergeant giggled at this fantastic suggestion. "As for *you*," said Maclean, rounding on the sentry at the gate, "I have never seen such a disgraceful uniform. Look at those filthy buttons. And look at those unpressed trousers and dirty shoes. Don't let me catch you again."

The sentry gave him and the others a tremendously smart present-arms as they passed through into the street. In return he got a disapproving glare and a grudging: "Good night."

It was nearly light when they got back to Churchill and Rose, who had been rejoined by Alston. The empty house where the wagon was parked seemed an ideal place to hide. There were two rooms reached by an outside staircase from the yard. They went up and shut the door behind them.

Slowly, Benghazi came to life. German fighters flew overhead, doing victory rolls, on their way home from sorties. Through a crack in the wall the S.A.S. men could see an Arab family in the neighbouring yard preparing a meal.

The view through gaps in the shutters was more disturbing. The house was opposite a German military headquarters; enemy officers and dispatch riders were coming and going in large numbers. And farther down the street was an unexploded bomb, dropped by the R.A.F. on May 20. Pedestrians were being warned to stand clear because it might go off at any moment.

The sun climbed higher and the rooms became insufferably hot. The men had breakfast of bully beef and rum. They took it in turns to be on guard while the others dozed or glanced at old newspapers and magazines which littered the tiled floor.

At 4 p.m. Churchill, who was on guard, heard a sound which they had been dreading.

Heavy footsteps were coming up the stairs. Was it the owner of the house? Had the wagon been found? Could it be a German from the H.Q. opposite?

Churchill flung open the door, tommy-gun in hand. It will never be known who got the greater surprise—Churchill, or the scared Italian sailor who fled down the stairs and into the street.

The possibility that the sailor had been sent to spy on them could not be ruled out, and the party stayed awake with guns and hand grenades at the ready. But no one else came; their visitor had probably been on a looting spree.

Darkness arrived at last. The street was almost empty when they set off on foot for another reconnaissance. They went along the sea-front, walking in the middle of the road, linked arm in arm, whistling and laughing as if they were occupying troops. Few people troubled to look in their direction.

Moored beside a quay were some tempting targets; a pair of motor torpedo boats. The men resolved to have another go at sabotage before leaving.

They returned to the house to collect the wagon and explosives.

Stirling drove up beside the boats and Rose endeavoured to get near enough to put a bomb on one of them, but although Maclean tried to distract a sentry's attention with small-talk—he remarked on a couple of ships, set on fire by the R.A.F., which were blazing across the water—the sentry insisted on watching Rose with the utmost suspicion.

Accordingly, Stirling called off the attempt and they headed for the road block on the town's outskirts.

Maclean told a similar story as before. "We are staff officers, recalled to the front," he announced.

"Yes sir," said the sentry, opening the barrier.

"You've no idea how lucky you are," said Maclean. "We wish that *we* were staying here. It's much safer." The sentry grinned. Maclean saluted.

At six o'clock on Sunday morning they met the L.R.D.G. patrol, who had given them up for lost. . . .

Stirling had every reason to be proud of that remarkable weekend. The S.A.S. was his invention.

He was only a subaltern in the Scots Guards in 1941 when he put forward the idea of the regiment as a revolutionary type of fighting force. Britain's position in North Africa was grim indeed; the enemy had almost reached Alexandria and the whole of the Middle East was in danger of falling.

Against opposition from some senior officers who scoffed at his suggestion as too unconventional and impracticable, Stirling managed to convince Generals Wavell and Auchinleck that small parties of saboteurs could penetrate into the desert and play havoc with airfields and vital lines of communication.

The nucleus of his venture was men from the newly disbanded Guards Commando and Scottish Commando. He selected them with care. Those who were merely "tough guys" did not interest him.

"Most of the work," he warned applicants, "will be done at night. It will need courage, fitness and determination in the highest degree. Just as important will be discipline, skill and intelligence."

Fifty-three officers and other ranks satisfied his requirements. Then he had to find somewhere for them to live—a problem which was speedily solved by taking tents from a New Zealand unit before their owners realized what was happening.

The tents were pitched at Kabrit for two reasons. The Bitter Lake nearby was ideal for practising the sabotage of ships; also close at hand was Bagoush aerodrome, where parachute jumping could be rehearsed.

The latter proposal was hailed by the R.A.F. with amusement and alarm.

"Parachute jumping," declared one officer, "is absolutely impossible in this part of the world. What with the warm air and humidity, experts say that a parachute can't take a man's weight."

Stirling resolved to prove the experts wrong. Intensive training began. Lieutenant Jock Lewis, a husky Australian, improvised a course on the basis of what he had heard about Ringway, the well-known parachute school near Manchester.

RINGWAY pupils, he had been told, jumped off platforms. He therefore built a platform twenty-five feet high, from which the men swung to the ground wearing harness.

Ringway practised falls by jumping off vehicles—so he rigged up a wooden trolley which moved down rails set on an incline. When it reached maximum speed his men jumped off it, with feet together, and did a forward or backward roll on hitting the sand.

Lewis tried the falls himself before asking others to do them. When he was hurt doing a backward roll at forty miles an hour, the speed was cut to thirty.

The fateful day for the first actual plane jumps had arrived. Stirling had acquired a twin-engined Bristol Bombay which could take four parachutists at a time.

The fifty-four men—all Stirling's men, including cooks, were operational—waited in apprehensive groups of four to be taken a thousand feet up on the far side of the lake where the jumps were to be made. Stirling, Lewis and two sergeants were the first group to go. They hooked lines from their parachute packs on to a rail inside the plane, and as they jumped through the open doorway the lines pulled out their chutes.

The four of them confounded the

MY BROTHER

David

WE were a large family, and when David was seven and I was just born we moved from the centre of Christchurch, New Zealand, to a rambling old house just outside the town. We kept quite a few animals, and when Claude, our first calf, was born, David begged to be allowed to look after him.

On the first day on which he became responsible for the calf's welfare, David generously gave him an extra helping of bran and followed this by giving him a long drink of water. He proudly told our handyman what he had done.

The man was horrified, knowing that the combination could be disastrous and that the calf could even swell so much he would burst. He and David chased poor Claude round and round the field, hoping that by keeping him moving they would get all his digestive organs working at once.

David was taken away from school at the age of eleven, as father believed that overwork and lack of fresh air had been the indirect cause of our eldest brother's sudden death. David spent the next five years running wild. He spent hours up in the hills reading, riding and drawing.

He had many hobbies, but he devoted most of his time to drawing. He made himself a drawing office out of an old piano case by making one of the narrow sides into a hinged door and adding a window. There was just room inside for himself and a drawing-board.

The first time he sold a drawing, he decided he deserved a new office. He cleared the chickens out of one of the chicken houses, painted it and installed himself proudly in his new studio.

When he was fifteen he had some drawings accepted by a local newspaper, but later the editor told him that his work was not going to be published and that no payment would be forthcoming.

David was furious, but to all his protests the editor remained unmoved. "You can have the office furniture if you like," he said, "but I am not going to pay."

My brother took him at his word. At five o'clock the next morning he and a friend entered the office, emptied the editor's large desk and carried it into a waiting van. When David returned some hours later, he found the editor sitting in his office chair staring furiously at the neat piles of paper spread on the floor.

After an hour's argument they came to an agreement. A trestle table was set up in the office. And my brother kept the desk.

WHO IS THIS FAMOUS BROTHER? See page 47

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experts by showing that jumps could be made in North Africa. But the day included tragedy. Two parachutes in later groups failed to open. Horrified companions heard the men screaming as they fell to their deaths.

Lewis handled the situation firmly. He paraded the entire unit and explained that the men's lines had come off the rail as they jumped.

"Steps are being taken to ensure that it will not happen again," he said. "In the meantime, get some sleep. We jump again tomorrow."

Most of the men chain smoked through the night, but the next morning there were no refusals to jump and no casualties. The spirit of the S.A.S. had been born. . . .

By day the men learned sabotage, demolition and the use of British and enemy weapons. They boxed, wrestled swam and played basketball. At night they were taught to navigate by the stars. They went on endurance marches with packs full of stones.

The climax of each man's training was a hundred-mile journey across the desert from Kabrit to Cairo, marching at night and hiding during the day while R.A.F. planes pretended to be hostile and tried to find him. In spite of all this, military chiefs doubted if the S.A.S. had much hitting power.

When Stirling blithely told the commanding officer of Heliopolis aerodrome, near Cairo, that the S.A.S. could virtually destroy his station in a night, the challenge was accepted with confidence. Heliopolis was a key aerodrome in the Middle East. Theoretically it was impregnable.

Having given notice of when they were to be expected, Stirling and a party of volunteers went to Cairo under cover of darkness.

Although extra guards had been mounted, there was little difficulty in slipping through them. In the morning, the R.A.F. found that gummed labels, representing bombs, had been stuck everywhere; on hangars, petrol dumps and stores.

The incident caused plenty of red faces. Its repercussions went back to Whitehall with far-reaching results. Security at every aerodrome was tightened—and Stirling had silenced his critics.

Auchinleck's army was stubbornly fighting a return towards Benghazi when the S.A.S. made two raids against the enemy. Both were failures. On the first raid, a thunderstorm scattered the parachutists as they dropped, and they had to march back to Kabrit with rain-soaked bombs. On the second, they reached a German airfield only to find it almost empty. The aircraft reported there had gone.

THEN came success which justified the months of hard training. Paddy Mayne and three others walked on to Tamet airfield, about two hundred miles behind the enemy lines, and put time bombs on twenty-four planes. The men were safely into the desert again when the bombs exploded and the planes vanished in pillars of flame.

A raid by Jock Lewis followed. The plan was to attack a resthouse for convoy drivers on the coast road at Mersa Brega, stir up as much confusion as possible and bring back a prisoner for interrogation.

Lewis decided to use a captured Italian lorry as a means of getting to the resthouse without arousing suspicion. Guided by a patrol of the L.R.D.G., who were experts in desert navigation, the party struck westwards from Kabrit and passed south of the front lines. Turning north, they reached the coast road in enemy territory and drove ten miles along it to Mersa Brega.

Lewis told his men to sit on top of the lorry, smoke cigarettes and behave as if they were enjoying themselves. Hatless and clad in pale khaki, they could, at a glance, have been mistaken for Germans. In fact, German and Italian convoys passing in the opposite direction did not look at them twice. Their drivers waved cheerily. The S.A.S. men waved back.

About a dozen enemy lorries were parked round the resthouse. From inside the building came the noise of

shouting, laughter and a radio playing dance music.

Lewis quietly ordered his driver to stop among the lorries in a position where a rapid getaway could be made. His men climbed out. They needed barely a minute to put a time-bomb on the petrol tank of every lorry. No one took the slightest notice of what they were doing.

They had climbed back again and were ready to produce their machine guns when a driver got out of a nearby lorry. Stocky and dark-skinned, he walked towards them aggressively, plainly about to speak and reaching for something in his pocket.

The S.A.S. men froze—but he only pulled out a packet of cigarettes. He went up to Lewis. "Got a light?" he asked, in Italian.

Lewis flicked open his lighter and held it to him.

"Thanks."

At that moment Lewis realized that the prisoner they wanted was standing there, waiting to be caught.

"I suppose you have guessed," he said, "that we are English."

"Eh?"

"We are English—*Inglesi*!"

The driver smiled. He threw back his head and laughed. "You Germans have such a wonderful sense of humour," he said. He began to walk over to the resthouse.

"Come here," ordered Lewis.

The driver stopped and turned. The cigarette fell from his lips. Lewis was pointing a revolver at him.

"Get in," said Lewis, nodding towards the back of the lorry. A very bewildered and indignant Italian did as he was told.

By that time, somebody in the resthouse had seen that strange events were happening. The shouting and laughter ended. Faces crowded the windows.

The S.A.S. men tried to fire their machine guns, but the mechanisms were jammed because of the thick oil which had been used on them. Excited Germans and Italians were running out of the resthouse firing revolvers as the lorry sped off down the road.

A few miles later the S.A.S. men turned into the desert and paused to hear the roar of the lorries blowing up.

The Italian, who had been crouching on the floorboards, terrified, soon recovered his happy disposition. A bottle of rum was passed round and his captors were kept awake by his songs until the small hours of the next morning.

The S.A.S. made more raids in quick succession. Always they had the upper hand because their presence such a long way behind the lines was a total surprise.

Jeeps were adopted as the best means of reaching and leaving targets in a hurry. They were able to cover the rocky country which forms three-quarters of North Africa, and when vast stretches of sand were reached, it was possible to sit back and drive for hours simply by stepping on the accelerator and steering with the knees. There was no sensation of speed; only a dreamlike feeling of timelessness and complete isolation.

Most raids on airfields kept to the same pattern. Four men took part. They split into pairs, each pair putting bombs on half the planes. Often, getting through airfield defences had to be done by cutting wire, but once Mayne and his party found a quicker route—through a wooden hut which had a door at each end.

Mayne opened the nearest door and peered cautiously into the darkness within. He heard the sound of breathing. "It's the guards. They're asleep," he whispered. "Follow me."

The four of them, each carrying a bulky haversack containing twelve bombs, tiptoed into the hut. They stepped round the sleeping Germans and let themselves out through the opposite door.

Once on the airfield, they placed their bombs and set the fuses. Then they went back through the hut, again without waking its inmates, and threw in a couple of hand-grenades as they left.

The legend that Mayne had a charmed life was further established on another raid when his time-bombs started to explode while he was still on the airfield. Six sentries rushed at him shouting: *"Avanti!"* and he replied: *"Freund!"*

The ruse did not work; the Italians raised their rifles. But the shots went wide—as did much of the fire aimed at S.A.S. raiders.

Casualties were few compared with the damage inflicted. Even when Stirling led a raid in which twenty-one jeeps, in box formation, with machine-guns blazing, drove on to an airfield at its peak operational hour, only one man was killed.

The S.A.S. scored a notable victory over the desert when, to maintain attacks in the Benghazi district, they established a base about two hundred miles from the coast. It was in the Sand Sea, a huge expanse of powdery white sand, scooped and ridged like waves. Hitherto it had been regarded as impassable for vehicles.

Sometimes the windblown surface was so treacherous that it took a day to push a truck a hundred yards. Once, a jeep somersaulted over the top of a knife-edged dune, killing the driver.

At night the men's blankets were coated with frost. In the day they wrapped themselves in long Arab headdresses in efforts to stop the burning sand from getting into their eyes, beards and food.

They lived on dates, raisins, cheese, oatmeal, pemmican and boiled sweets. Their water ration started as a pint a day, but went down to a tepid half-pint when Germans poisoned wells at some of the oases.

DURING the Eighth Army's advance the S.A.S. moved in the same direction to stay behind the enemy. The American First Army was pressing eastwards towards Tunis, and the Eighth was approaching the Mareth Line, when Stirling set out on patrol with ten jeeps. His regiment had, by that time, destroyed about four hundred planes.

Rommel regarded him as the most wanted man in North Africa. Intelligence officers had been specially flown from Germany with orders to catch him; the Arab population had been offered bribes for news about his movements.

These promises of reward led to a group of wandering Arabs reporting the patrol shortly after it had passed south-west of the Mareth Line. Stirling and his men were striking deep into the desert near the Gabes Gap with intentions of turning north-east to blow up the coast railway, when they heard, faintly at first, but growing louder and louder, an ominous drone in the sky.

They recognized a German reconnaissance plane, a Fieseler Storch.

"Scatter!" ordered Stirling.

They did so, hoping that the pink and green camouflage on their jeeps would be as effective as it had been on previous occasions, but with sinking hearts they saw the pilot circle round them and heard him radio their position back to his base.

The net closed in at dawn the next day. They had driven into a deep wadi near the coast in order to get some sleep, and had just shut their eyes when there was a burst of shots. A sergeant shouted: "Jerry troops are coming up the wadi. Colonel Stirling says it's every man for himself."

The Germans got their prize. Stirling was captured. But six men ran up the side of the wadi. Three of them hid near the top. The others—Sergeant Sadler, Sergeant Cooper and Corporal Seekings—stumbled forty yards on into another wadi, where they hid under some bushes.

Renewed firing started at 2 p.m. The Germans had begun a thorough

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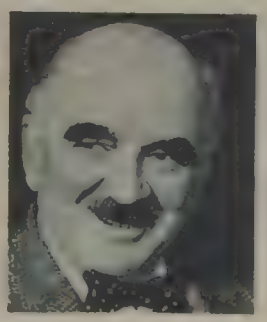
MY BROTHER DAVID

See page 45



David Low, the famous cartoonist, is the brother of Mrs. Pedro Vargas

search of the area by walking in line and shooting revolvers into every likely hiding place.

The n.c.o.s heard them halt nearby while three of the S.A.S. men were caught.

Sadler whispered: "Our turn next."

They waited and waited, but no shots came. Cautiously they raised their heads—and were face to face with a herd of goats. Frightened by the firing, the animals had huddled round the bushes. The searchers went past them.

With only a pocket compass and a small-scale map as guides, the three set out to walk a hundred miles to the First Army, who were the nearest Allied troops. Their arrival four days later was of the greatest military importance. Their route proved that it would be possible for the Eighth Army to out-flank the Mareth Line and link up with the Americans.

The end of the campaign in Africa was in sight. . . .

Such, then, was the fabulous record of the outfit I had joined. I was put into A Squadron—the regiment had two squadrons, A and B, each of about two hundred men—and soon found that preparations for a very different type of warfare were in hand.

I and Alec Muirhead, a lieutenant who had arrived a day before myself, returned to our tents after breakfast one morning and saw that our kits had gone. Then we heard the revving of engines. Beside the road was a line of three-ton lorries. We ran over to them. "A Squadron?" we asked.

"Hop in," shouted the driver. "We're off to Syria—to learn to ski."

The lorries made slow progress up the road which wound laboriously into the mountains of the Lebanon. Clouds heavy with snow billowed round the peaks. Behind and far below us the rooftops of Tripoli basked in the late afternoon sunshine.

A nightmare journey in which our wheels slipped within inches of ravines ended when we pulled up at a bleak building of grey stone. In peacetime it was a flourishing hotel. Now there were Nissen huts on the flat roof and, above the door, the words: "Middle East Ski School."

Lessons began, and with snow around us we forgot the desert and its heat, dust and flies.

As the days passed, we suffered a spate of rumours. The Germans were advancing through the Caucasus and we, it was said, were to be taken through the Black Sea by submarine and landed behind the enemy. Sweeping down from above the snow-line, we were to ambush troops and blow up supplies.

It sounded a likely assignment, and

the rumours seemed confirmed when Captain Griffith Pugh, who was later to be a member of the successful Everest expedition, showed us what real mountain climbing meant. He taught us to ski over twenty-foot drops and find our way through fog and blizzard with a compass, map and altimeter.

Much worse was to come. "Tomorrow," he said, "a section will climb to here."

He pointed to a spot on a map. "It is just over ten thousand feet. They will take with them shovels, picks and

MISTAKES—5

A man finds he has been in the wrong at every preceding stage of his career, only to deduce the astonishing conclusion that he is at last entirely right.

R. L. Stevenson

tents, and begin to build a camp. They will stay there overnight, when another section will go up and finish the work. In that way you will get to know the problems of living above the snow-line."

The first section left laden like packhorses and were led by Alec Muirhead. I buttonholed him on his return. He said it hadn't been too bad, except that he woke during the night and found it snowing *inside* the tent. The heat from his body had caused condensation on the roof, and the cold outside had turned it into snow.

Next day I went out with my own section to complete the building of the camp which, Alec told me, was at the base of a thirty-foot wall of snow.

The first part of the route was straightforward, but clouds gathered, and soon the ridge marking the ten thousand feet line was shrouded from view. An icy wind blew down the mountainside, and the sky grew darker. Snow began to fall.

Sweat poured from us, but our hands were numb with cold. At every halt we swung our arms to ward off frostbite. By the time we reached the top of the ridge the light was fading. Falling snow blended with the surrounding whiteness and made it almost impossible to see where we were, but we got to the area of the camp.

Systematically we started to look for Alec's tents. A man gave a shout. We ski-ed over to where he stood. There was a thirty-foot wall of snow all right but no sign of the tents. We looked again. Another man shouted, but still no tents.

The truth dawned. There was not one thirty-foot wall, but many. We went from one to another, becoming more and more dispirited and confused. And round us swirled the snow, thicker and thicker in the gathering darkness.

Night had come and the snow was coming down faster than ever when we decided that our only course of action, since we had no tents of our own, was to return to the school.

The two-hour trip was unexpectedly rapid and breath-taking. High on both sides of us rose jagged white cliffs; immediately ahead the ground leaped and twisted downwards out of sight.

Not until we got to the school did I realize what we had done. Hardly able to see a thing, we had come through Devil's Gorge—a ravine so dangerous that even in daylight it was avoided by all but expert skiers.

The sequel to our evening out came two days afterwards when another section climbed to the camp. They found our tracks, which showed that at one point we had been standing within twenty-five yards of the camp. We did not know this because the tents had been completely buried by snow.

Perhaps it was just as well we did not find them.

The six-week course ended, and everyone felt worried and unsettled on the journey back to Kabrit. We knew that Paddy Mayne had been called to G.H.Q., Cairo—but beyond that, nothing. The Germans were retreating in the Caucasus, so almost certainly the plans for Black Sea submarines, if they existed, had been scrapped. What, then, was the future of the S.A.S.?

Paddy addressed us in a big marquee. "When I was in Cairo," he said, "I was told that there was no more useful work for the S.A.S. to do. I did not agree. I said as much. Now I have been given the choice of disbanding or carrying on in a new rôle but with fewer numbers."

There was a murmur of disappointment.

"I have therefore agreed," he went on, "to the formation of a Special Raiding Squadron which will undertake special assault tasks for the army.

"Our strength will be cut to about three hundred and fifty. The R.S.M. will now read out the names of the officers and n.c.o.s who have been chosen, and I will leave it to section commanders to pick the men."

Quickly the R.S.M. began to run through the names. I looked round unhappily. The prospect of returning to the training school on the Bitter Lake was heart-breaking.

But the R.S.M.'s voice interrupted my thoughts. ". . . Two troop, C section, Lieutenant Harrison. . . ."

I was overjoyed as I stepped forward to join the rest of the lucky ones.

The Afrika Korps had been defeated. Europe remained. Where would the attack go in? The Balkans? Italy? Southern France?

It did not matter. The important thing was that I'd be there.

NEXT WEEK: I parachute into France to fight with the Maquis

"These Men Are Dangerous" by Derrick Harrison, M.C., will be published as a book by Cassell in September

Dai Davies and the unseen power

Continued from page 19

supper; sausage and mash it always is there, and after supper we had the usual concert and the jugs of beer went round. I drank my fair whack, for it was good beer and, to cut the story short, I lost the rest of the team and missed the coach back home.

"So I started walking home, hoping to get a lift. Now, as you know, it's a good three miles, and at that time of night, for it was past twelve, there's not much traffic about, so I wasn't expecting much luck. It was raining, a nasty drizzle, and I was getting pretty wet outside—I was wet enough inside as it was—when along came this car.

"It was the first car I'd seen since I left the village, and it came up from behind me with the lights full on, travelling quite slowly. I turned and stepped into the road to wave it down and then stepped back again smartly, for it didn't stop.

"It was travelling so slowly that I thought it was slowing for me, so, running alongside, I opened the door and got in.

"And then I got a shock—there was no driver. No driver, no passengers, nobody in the car but me—and along we glided smoothly and silently, with no sound but my breathing and the drum of the rain and the swish of the tyres. The engine wasn't running, there was no one at the wheel, and we ghosted along slowly and dreamily through the rain.

"I sat there amazed and a bit frightened at first, but it was warm and dry and out of the rain, and we were going in the right direction. So, sleepy as I was with the beer, after a bit I sat back, content and relaxed. We came down to the corner by the bridge, our headlights sweeping through the trees, and I thought I might have to do something here, steer or brake or even jump out. But no.

"In through the open driver's window came a hand, floating in, green and drowned-looking by the light of the instruments, a hand that took the wheel and turned it gently so that we swung round the corner as neat and as sweet as you like. My neck prickled and the sweat dropped off my top lip when I saw this. But I wasn't harmed or affected in any other way.

"The hand vanished and we moved on, deliberately and slowly down the road, and I relaxed again. I really gave myself up to the comfort and the warmth. At every corner the hand came in and I was no longer afraid—just sleepy and comfortable.

"We finally came to the first set of lights, down on Owen Street, and the lights were against us. Sure enough the car stopped, waited for the change, and, on green, away we went smoothly riding down the street, with no engine, no driver, and the steering done by a green, wet, disembodied hand.

"Down the street we went, down the dark street, for the lamps were all out, down the empty street towards the second set of lights in Market Lane. These, too, were at red, and again we stopped and waited for the change. On the green we moved forward. The hand, looking more dead and putrid than ever in the light from the signal, came in through the window to turn the wheel, and round the corner we went.

"As you all know, I live straight on up Market Lane, so I was at the end of my journey and I opened the door and hopped out. There I stood on the kerb in the rain, watching the ghostly car go on, silently and dreadfully gliding up the road, till its tail light disappeared round the corner and it was gone.

"I stood there under the traffic lights thinking about what I'd seen and done, and smoking a cigarette. There was no one about at all—just the lights blinking red, amber, green, and me and my thoughts, and the hissing rain.

"I was just about to go, when a man silently emerged from the darkness and asked for a light. He was soaking, sopping wet. Water was running out of the bottoms of his trousers and squeezing up out of the eyelets of his shoes, and his hair was plastered to his cheeks.

"His matches were wet, he said, so I gave him a few out of the box in my pocket and we smoked together in silence.

"I'd been thinking about this journey of mine and needed to tell someone about it, for I was puzzled. So I started telling him, for he was there, and it was all so fresh in my mind.

"'A funny thing happened to me,' I started. 'I was walking back from Church End about an hour ago. . . .'

"He looked at me in disbelief. 'From Church End?'

"I said: 'Yes, why?'

"He looked at me strangely, looked at my pretty dry clothes, then at his wet ones and said: 'I've just come from there.'

"It was my turn to look at him oddly, for we'd passed no one on the way. "'Yes,' he said, 'My car ran out of petrol there and I had to push the ruddy thing all the way back here, in the rain.'"

Dai got up, with his pint pot in his hand. He said: "Now Aunty, I'll have one more pint of beer and get off home." THE END

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THEY STAY UP BY THEMSELVES

Close look at bargains

Continued from page 17

justified. Some are the result of mistreating fabrics like wool. Not long ago a housewife sent him a woollen vest shrunk out of recognition. "I only boiled it for fifteen minutes," she complained, "and you can see what happened."

Rejecting her request for help in getting her money back, Diplock added pointed advice on how to wash woollen garments.

According to the R.T.S.A. definition, anything marked "wool" must contain at least ninety per cent wool by weight. R.T.S.A. definitions do not have the force of law, but they are accepted in the trade as a standard of correct labelling, and Diplock cites them in court when testifying in cases of false descriptions.

A Bradford dealer who offered "baby wool" that contained mostly rayon learned the R.T.S.A. definition at a high price.

An advertising agent sent Diplock a copy of this Bradford man's advertisement. *Wool from Bradford, the world's centre of wool, Direct from the mill in Bradford, Prices very low for top-quality wool* were among the slogans.

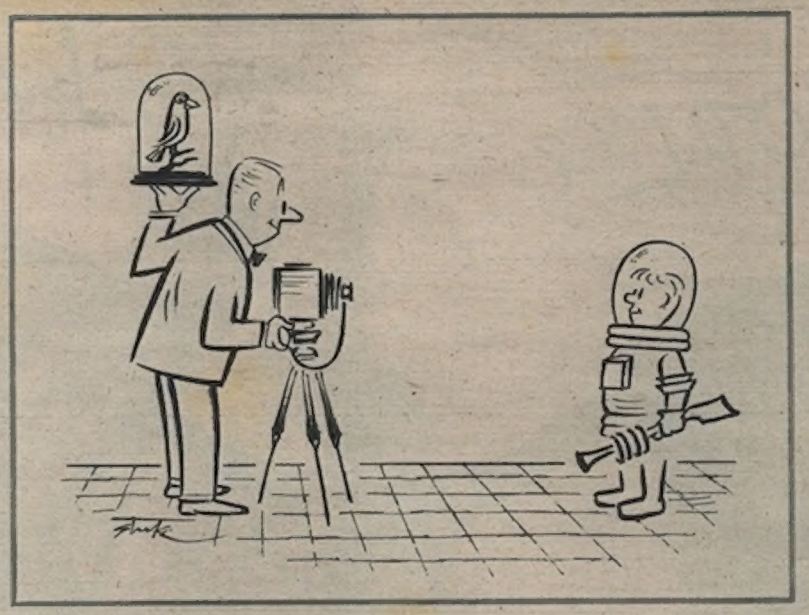
Diplock sent for samples, enclosing payment. When the Bradford magistrates gave their verdict the chairman, George Carter, said: "We are concerned for the reputation of the city and its trade. This sort of thing won't do it any good."

For applying false trade descriptions to knitting wool, knitting yarn and rug yarn, the dealer was fined £367 10s. with £105 costs. It was the stiffest penalty any of Diplock's prosecutions have yielded.

The heaviest imposition for which Diplock claims credit was levied by Customs and Excise. It arose from a sample of gabardine presented to Diplock by one of the manufacturer's competitors.

"A swindle on the public," Diplock announced at a press conference. Gabardine, originally made for raincoating, should be closely woven. Diplock demonstrated how it was possible to see through the sample when it was held up to the light.

Rather than prosecute on behalf of



the association, Diplock turned the case over to the Board of Trade. Included in the evidence he had uncovered were documents showing that the cloth, while not marked "Utility," had been invoiced and sold as such. The Board of Trade advised the Customs and Excise who ruled that as the gabardine did not meet Utility standards it should pay tax. Taxes and penalties totalled £10,000.

Diplock whistled in amazement when he heard the decision. "Will you announce this?" he asked the Customs authorities. He was told that the Customs did not feel it their duty to seek publicity, but they would authorize Diplock to use the information as he saw fit. Diplock immediately called another press conference.

Although the Utility scheme is now dead, standards and specifications developed under it are still in use. Part of Diplock's duties is making sure that, where the specification is quoted, the material matches the set standard.

He is probably the only man who has succeeded in getting the House of Commons to listen to details of a furniture sale. He arranged this with the help of ten members who all asked the Attorney-General questions based on information about a particular sale supplied by Diplock.

Featured in the sale was a bedroom suite advertised as "Usual price £70 6s. 8d.—Sale price £28 10s." A trade association reported the offer to Diplock, who investigated and found that the suite could not be produced for less than £50.

In the House of Commons, James Hudson (then Member for Ealing North) asked the Attorney-General "whether he will take action against a furnishing firm whose public advertisements are designed to secure payment for the delivery of furniture which the firm is unable to deliver, and knows it is unable to deliver, the firm afterwards declining to refund the payment when disappointed and deceived expectant purchasers apply for the refund."

After nine other members had asked about the same firm, the Solicitor-General announced that the Director of Public Prosecutions would investigate.

This reply gave Norman Dodds, M.P., the opportunity to strike a final blow in the House of Commons by naming the firm concerned and the names under which it traded. The names and alleged offence were reported by the press.

"When I decided to speak about shoddy clothing in the House," Dodds says, "I told Roger Diplock. He provided me with samples—pieces of spurious seersucker, dresses spoiled by dye running out of buttons and the like. They made quite an impression when I produced them."

Diplock was a frequent visitor to the House of Commons while the Merchandise Marks Act was being amended in 1953. This was regarded as a non-party issue and Diplock found himself being consulted by both sides of the House.

Board of Trade experts who were framing the new provisions sought the R.T.S.A.'s advice. At the same time, Opposition members, who wanted to speak during the debate, asked Diplock for help. The Labour Party formed a sub-committee which Diplock briefed on the R.T.S.A.'s policy of bringing the Bill up to date.

"Later," Diplock recalls, "I sat in the gallery and heard the arguments I had advanced as they were expressed by different members. It was a satisfying experience."

Another member who uses Diplock's services is Elaine Burton. One result of her Parliamentary compaign is that the Board of Trade now undertakes prosecutions for false labelling of goods. This is an advance on the position taken by the President of the Board of Trade in 1954 when he declared it would be "quite intolerable" if shoppers complained to the government when they felt they had been cheated.

Diplock, who was born in Croydon forty-five years ago, obtained prewar experience in textiles, then in journalism. After serving in the army as an air liaison officer, he joined the R.T.S.A. His sometimes brash methods complemented the association's crusading policy against unfair trading.

Eliminating false descriptions is one side of Diplock's work; another is educating both shoppers and shop assistants to recognize goods by name. How long this will take Diplock has no idea.

In the course of one of his talks to a staff training course, Diplock described the construction of a cloth and referred to its warp and weft.

To make sure that his audience understood him, Diplock asked one of them to explain the meaning of warp and weft. "I think," she said hesitantly, "that they are two textile towns in Yorkshire." THE END

Peter Cox puts life into stone

Continued from page 32

stone," says Cox. He objects strongly to the practice of painting stonework. "Stone must be allowed to breathe."

Frost is another of stone's enemies. Water which gets into the pores and fissures of stone freezes during the winter and the subsequent expansion sets up a pressure which causes fractures. Where stone is exposed to contact with rusting iron or steel, decay sets in rapidly. Cox's head foreman, Tom Gosnell, was once asked to remove some iron lettering from the walls of a bank.

"The rust from the letters had eaten so deeply into the wall," says Gosnell, "that it was impossible to cut back into the stone deeply enough to remove the stain."

Like wood, stone contains sap when it is first quarried and is usually left to season. Sir Christopher Wren insisted that the Portland stone used in the construction of St. Paul's Cathedral should be allowed to season for three years. Some types of stone are incompatible—the association of limestone and sandstone in the same building, for example, usually leads to the decay of the sandstone, which is the softer of the two.

The high cost of new stone has accounted in recent years for a substantial increase in the demand for restoration. One problem for Cox is the dearth of experienced craftsmen. "We have to train them ourselves." When he advertised for a skilled stone restorer recently, one of the few replies came from a woman. "She appeared to think we were in the diamond-polishing trade," he says.

Restorers cut back the decayed stone to a depth at which the stone is sound, and bore holes to accommodate copper dowels. The cavities are then filled with plastic stone, a compound which includes lime and silver sand mixed with the appropriate kind of stone dust. The new stone is shaped and moulded to conform with the original line; great care is taken to harmonize it with the old.

The work is carried out from scaffolding or from cradles slung from the roof. When two of Cox's restorers asked to be admitted to the Royal Mint they upset all the elaborate security arrangements. The doormen found that they had been checked in a few hours previously, and there was no record of checking them out. At lunchtime they had casually lowered themselves to the ground in a cradle instead of climbing back and going out through the building.

When a building requires cleaning as well as restoration, the walls are sprayed with water until the surface grime is removed and the encrustations become soft enough to be removed by rubbing down and brushing. Some of the largest buildings in Britain need as much as 100,000 gallons of water each.

Streams of water running across pavements and sprinkling down from ledges often become a public nuisance, although screens are erected for protection. At Selfridge's, water filtered through the pavement and saturated the underground telephone cables, putting hundreds of lines temporarily out of action. Tom Gosnell was once confronted by a hysterical woman who had received a minor drenching.

"She thought we were using acids, and nobody could tell her different." He considered the suggestion almost as a personal affront. "Nobody in the trade would dream of using acid."

Cox recalls an urgent telephone message from the manager of a cinema which was being cleaned by his men: "Can you get down here straight away?" Cox replied that he was just about to leave for a holiday.

"If I were you, I'd postpone it," replied the manager. "My cinema is virtually floating down the street."

"I did as he suggested," says Cox, "and found that the hoses feeding the water from a tank in the roof had become disconnected. The water had been diverted into the building."

Cox believes that the best advertisement for restoration is the appearance of a building newly restored and cleaned, and he keeps a stock of photographs handy. He went to Sandhurst to photograph the Royal Military Academy after it had been renovated by his firm.

"I was about to take a picture in front of the building when I noticed that something was wrong. I soon realized what it was. A corset was displayed in a prominent position on top of the clock tower."

A scaffolder was sent up to remove the offending garment. "That," says Cox, "was the most difficult part of the whole operation."

Cox himself has an appreciative eye for architecture. Arguing against that section of opinion which prefers to leave weathered buildings alone for aesthetic reasons, he maintains that when a building becomes encrusted and the stone is allowed to decay the whole building loses value artistically.

"Some people think a good weathering is a protection, but it does more harm than good." It is the same with statues. "Sculptors and stonemasons don't want their carvings to become obscure. It's our intention to bring them to light."

When Cox was demobilized from the army after wartime service, he teamed up with a friend and acquired a bulldozer which the two men used to clear building sites. By the time the business had expanded to three bulldozers, Cox had picked up a steam generator at a bargain price and begun to experiment on stone cleaning by steam. One of his first jobs was on his own office building, in North Row, Mayfair.

"It was my first time in a cradle and I felt extremely nervous. The steam pipes often exploded and the job took much longer than expected. I learned a valuable lesson in estimating."

This method eventually proved efficient but uneconomical, and he found himself falling back on the more conventional methods of stone cleaning.

Realizing the possibilities in the field of restoration, Cox started building up an experienced team of restorers, including the seven Gosnell brothers, each of whom has spent his whole working life in the building trade.

Stone restoring is difficult and often dangerous work. During restorations to St. Mary's Hospital, Tom Gosnell fell through a hole in the roof and landed twenty feet below in one of the hospital corridors. "Before I had time to get up," he says, "a couple of nurses were wheeling me into the X-ray theatre." The plates revealed no broken bones. THE END

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In The Day's Battle	He's A Big Boy, So
Winston, Anthony, Harold	Strangely Quiet
Way We're Going	Modern Sweethearts
Shadow Of Unemployment	Humbug
More And More	With Tears In Her Eyes
Envy, Hatred And Malice	Flurry Of Activity
Power Of Uno	Not On The Programme
Democracy's Citadel	Tolling In The Mud
In The Factory Tomorrow	If Mum Were Chancellor

Incomplete "Examples"—see Instructions

Made.....Sit Up	New To.....
The Baby.....And	.....The Housewife
Keeps Her.....	The.....Were Sorry, But

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2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.
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